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Reading the Bible Ethically

Recovering the Voice in the Text

By

Eric J. Douglass



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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Douglass, Eric J., M. Div.

Reading the Bible ethically : recovering the voice in the text / by Eric J. Douglass.

pages cm. — (Biblical interpretation series, ISSN 0928-0731 ; Volume 133)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-28286-5 (hardback : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-90-04-28287-2 (e-book) 1. Bible—Hermeneutics. 2. Bible—Reading. 3. Bible—Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title.

BS476.D68 2014

220.6—dc23

2014029899

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual “Brill” typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0928-0731

ISBN 978-90-04-28286-5 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-28287-2 (e-book)

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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Acknowledgments

It would be impossible to list all of those who have helped me with this project. Nevertheless, several people deserve special mention, Elizabeth Malbon, Charles Brown, Ken Chatlos, and Brian Mooney chief among them, without whom this project would not have come to completion. I would also like to thank the “Bible and Modern Culture” section of the SECSOR meeting, as well as my family (Felecia, Michael, Haley, and Daniel), for their patience in listening and their offering of gentle critique. Similarly for the detailed reading and suggestions from Ruben Zimmermann. I would also be remiss if I failed to remember those who taught me, and especially Jack Dean Kingsbury, Paul Achtemeier, John Carroll, Frances Taylor-Gench, and Katie Cannon. Finally, I am grateful to have stood on the shoulders of so many great scholars, whose books litter my shelves, and whose ideas litter the pages of this book.

The Disappearing Author

How does one make an author ‘disappear’? After all, the laws of physics are not suddenly suspended when an author walks into the room! But there are ways of reading in which the author seems to vanish. She (in this text, authors will be designated with female pronouns and readers with male pronouns, where possible) may recede to the point of seeming to disappear. Some ways of reading even celebrate this loss, as in the ‘Death of the Author’ movement. Below we will outline the general trends which create such a disappearance, and discuss why this might be an ethical problem for readers of biblical texts.

Disappearance 1.0

One way to disappear is by losing one’s voice. An author without a voice, however that voice is conveyed, seems to vanish. In the past, we have seen this with the class of ‘women’ and ‘slaves,’ where their voices were revoked, so that they did not seem to count for much. In the present era, we still see this silencing, though it is now aimed more at the ‘poor’ and ‘immigrants.’ To silence an author—or anyone—is to render that person invisible. They cannot communicate their interests, passions, or meanings, so that they do not seem present. Further, as they have no voice, someone else must do the speaking for them, though this person may have very different interests. Something seems wrong with denying any class of persons a voice.

At first blush, this consideration appears irrelevant when it comes to authors. After all, we see their texts in front of us, with all of their words and punctuation marks. Their books even have their names embossed on the title page. Their ‘meanings’ go out into the world, and have effects upon the lives of readers. People experience grief when reading the book of Lamentations and fear when reading the story of Job. They try to change the world when they read the Gospel of Matthew. These authors certainly seem to have their voices!

But closer examination reveals that readers do not have the author’s voice, but only her words and her arrangement of words. This is a significant difference. To say that one has ‘heard the voice of a person’ is to imply that communication and understanding have occurred, whether this is the case or not. This implication is tied to the notion of presence: the actual presence of the speaker allows her to convey information in other ways (e.g., gestures, facial

expressions) and to recognize when the other has misunderstood her (e.g., responses that do not fit). Indeed, when the speaker is physically present, the hearer can easily ask for clarification. While none of these guarantee full communication—indeed, full communication is a myth—they do give the hearer some confidence that communication has occurred, and provide language resources for some level of verification.

Such is not the case for written texts. Readers only have the author's words and her arrangements of words. Readers construct 'a voice' from those elements. While some elements of this constructed voice are more accurate in spoken speech, while others in written speech (as Derrida reminds us with *différance*), that is not the issue here. The point is that readers assign their use of words to those marks on the page. When a misunderstanding occurs, they do not have the author's presence for correction or verification. Their primary resource is public language itself.

But it is precisely in public language that the problem lies. The author writes with her grasp of public usage, while readers read with their grasp of public usage. These 'grasps of language' are not identical: readers do not have the author's mental images or her mental acts. Schalkwyk puts it nicely:

The argument that the author intended to use *this* word is compatible with the agency of the author without attributing to him or her the capacity to control and determine what that word must mean.¹

So, whose 'voice' does the reader create? If it is based on the reader's grasp of modern language, then he is reproducing his own voice, which only bears a similarity to the author's voice. When 21st century American readers come upon the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, they grasp 'Samaritan' simply as a foreign person who helps others. But this misses the 1st century drama of the event: Jewish people hated Samaritans, viewing them as sacrilegious, so that the notion of a Samaritan 'doing the work of God' was unimaginable. In short, this reading risks silencing the author, replacing her voice with the reader's voice, so that the author begins to disappear behind the veil of language.

Indeed, some readers celebrate this disappearance. For example, some forms of reader-response criticism begin with the recognition that readers only have their community's language and culture. This will predetermine the reading strategies that they apply to the text, so that the text's meaning is really a function of those communal practices. So Fish states that "meanings come already calculated, not because of norms embedded in the language but

¹ David Schalkwyk, "Giving Intention its Due?" *Style* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 320; author's italics.

because language is always perceived, from the very first, within a structure of norms.”² For such readers, there is no author’s voice ‘in’ the text, but only marks that they use to produce their own voices: the reader becomes the author, and creates the meaning that he or she ‘finds’ in the text. In short, these readers more or less talk to themselves.

In the end, some forms of interpretation celebrate the loss of the author and the centrality of the ‘will to power’ of readers. Under the central values of individuality and relevance, readers create the brave new world of the text. But just outside this celebration, there remains that problematic notion of silencing the author’s voice, and whether or not this is a good thing.

Disappearance 2.0

Another way for the author to disappear is by having someone else do the talking, so that the author is only repeating what someone else has said. When this occurs, the author becomes a kind of ghost who ‘stands in’ for the actual author. It is from this notion that we get the term ‘ghost writer,’ where the writer repeats and edits what the actual author has already said. The ghost writer becomes invisible. A different person’s name appears as the ‘actual author’ of the work, and it is this person who gets credit for the content. In a sense, the ghost writer becomes a kind of cipher for the actual author, repeating what the actual author has said, but in better form. Yet something seems wrong with assuming that the credited author is ‘the’ author, as if the ghost writer only translated the other’s intentions and never added anything of her own. Surely the ghost writer leaves some residue of her presence in the text.

At first blush, this discussion might appear to be irrelevant to the vast majority of texts, as most authors do not use a ghost writer. But, in fact, all authors are guilty of repeating what is already prior to them. Authors use genres that they did not create, social institutions that they did not form, and cultural models that they did not fashion. In a sense, they are repeating what someone else has said, though in this case the ‘someone else’ is their literary culture. Authors repeat—or perhaps better, reproduce—their own culture’s social practices and social institutions in the text.

Indeed, some forms of interpretation are based on the recognition of ‘authorial repetition’ of culture. For example, Marxist interpretation is rooted

2 Stanley Fish, “Is There a Text in This Class?” in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986), 531.

in the notion that economic institutions create a certain kind of author, and this author reproduces her class structure in her text:

The way in which an artist thinks will be expressed in his or her work. This manner of thinking will be influenced or determined by his or her position and development within a society characterized by class conflict.³

In a similar way, feminist interpretation is based on the authorial reproduction of societal gender structures, while postcolonial interpretation is based on the reproduction of Eurocentric hegemony. All suggest, to one degree or another, that the author is a cipher for some set of institutional structures: she simply repeats these in the text. As Salkeld writes:

The anti-humanist drift of much theory associated with Lacan, Althusser and Foucault . . . has tended to write off the possibility of human agency, or at least circumscribe it heavily amid wider structures of language, ideology and discourse.⁴

Interpretation, then, becomes a matter of setting aside the surface structure in order to reach this deeper layer, which is the 'real' meaning of the text. When these readers come upon the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, they might see the systematic oppression of the lower class, who can only survive by becoming bandits. But this is to miss the drama of a sacrilegious person doing the work of God, and so giving aid where it is neither expected nor wanted.

In the most radical form, these trends suggest a 'Death of the Author' movement, where the actual author—the one whose name appears on the title page—is replaced by 'Culture' with a capital 'C.' Barthes boldly proclaims that

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- 3 Andrew Edgar, "Adorno and the Early Frankfurt School," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 110; this is Edgar's summary of Lowenthal's work. Edgar adds: "In effect, the work of art is credited with no meaning or worth independent of its ideological position" (*Ibid.*, 111). On this reduction of culture, on the one hand to ideological determinism (e.g., Marxism), and on the other to abstractions lacking distinctiveness (e.g., postmodernism, postcolonialism), cf. Marshall Sahlins, "Two or Three Things that I Know About Culture," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 5, no. 2 (Sept 1999): 405–407.
 - 4 Duncan Salkeld, "New Historicism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 69.

the author “can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original,” so that the text really is “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.”⁵ For Barthes, the author is dead, and is replaced by a “scribe” who “no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary . . .”⁶ The early Foucault also proclaims the death of the author. For him, the author occupies a ‘subject position,’ which is constructed by cultural dialogues: “In short, the subject (and its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analysed as a complex and variable function of discourse.”⁷ This risks becoming a kind of cultural determinism, where the author, in the sense being an individual or a subject, vanishes.

For these authors, as with some forms of historical criticism and new historicism, the author is, more or less, Culture. The author is a cipher for Culture. The author does not disappear behind the mask of Culture, but is the mask itself. Culture makes the author, and the author, as a good ghost writer, simply repeats what is already anterior and prior.

In the end, some forms of interpretation celebrate the loss of the author and the centrality of the author’s Culture, including its controlling economic, gender, racial, and Eurocentric hegemony. Under the central value of ‘deep ideological structures,’ readers create the brave new world of the text. But just outside this celebration, there remains that problematic notion of silencing the author’s voice, and whether or not this is a good thing.

Disappearance 3.0

Another way for the author to disappear is by having someone change her text, so that it is no longer the author’s words. This would not simply make the author disappear, but would represent a manipulation of her voice. When the author hears that voice, as attached to her text, she does not even recognize it as her own, but as something foreign.

5 Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1468.

6 Ibid., 1468–9.

7 Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1636. Dianne Skinner summarizes Foucault’s later conception: “In Foucault’s studies of Antiquity, the subject who emerges in the technologies of the self is an autonomous, reflective and self-forming being” (“Foucault, Subjectivity and Ethics: Towards a Self-forming Subject,” *Organization* 20, no. 6 [November 2013]: 907, accessed May 6, 2014, doi: 10.1177/1350508412460419).

At first blush, this might appear irrelevant to any discussion on ‘serious’ reading. After all, who would deliberately change the text? But this question is deceptively simple. When readers pick up a narrative, they do so with an expectation which arose from some desire. Perhaps they desire to find models for practical living. Perhaps they expect to find the culture of the author’s period, with its manifestations of patriarchy, economic imperialism, and the like. Perhaps they desire to commune with the author, and so encounter ‘the other.’ But regardless of the type, this desire immediately biases readers to find just that in the text. They will implicitly, and even preconsciously, shape the raw elements of the text to fit that desire. As Phelan comments:

Audiences who place their own interests . . . at the center of their reading risk turning reading into a repetitious activity that misses the ways in which authors can extend their vision of human possibilities and experience.⁸

But desire, by itself, is not an action. It inspires—or better yet, selects—a particular kind of interpretive action. It selects particular steps of reading which are designed to create the object of that desire. This is simply another way of talking about methods of interpretation. The reader’s desire selects an interpretive strategy which is designed to ‘do’ certain things with the text. So, generally speaking, a Marxist strategy is designed to reveal class oppression, a feminist strategy to reveal patriarchy, and a postcolonial strategy to reveal Eurocentric traditions.

All interpretive methods are designed to reveal particular ‘objects’ in the text, though in doing so they also risk creating the very objects that they purport to find. Fish puts it nicely: “I did what critics always do: I ‘saw’ what my interpretive principles permitted or directed me to see, and then I turned around and attributed what I had ‘seen’ to a text and an intention.”⁹ It sounds as if reading is, by definition, a subtle form of manipulation of the text. Even the so-called ‘scientific’ and ‘literal’ forms of interpretation are selected by the reader’s desires, and so are designed to ‘do’ certain things to texts, as dictated by each method’s assumptions.

8 James Phelan, “Seth’s Choice: ‘Beloved’ and the Ethics of Reading,” in *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, ed. Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 97.

9 Stanley Fish, “Interpreting the Variorum,” in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 176.

However, while some strategies attempt to maintain some notion of neutrality, so as to avoid this manipulation, others celebrate its complete absence. Some stances are designed to give free expression to the reader's creativity, as the primary value of reading. Instead of a passive repetition, they celebrate the reader's active and imaginative creation. So we come to Derrida's famous quote, where reading represents:

... the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation.¹⁰

Or, as Beardslee writes on poststructuralism, reading "challenges the reader, throws open the reader's world to creative discovery, to new associations that may be suggested as much by irrational or chance associations as by the logical relations ..."¹¹ Indeed, some view deconstruction as bringing the text "into contradiction with itself, opening its intended meaning ... onto an alterity which goes against what the text wants to say or mean."¹²

These readers might focus on the gaps in the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, such as where the text gives no reason for the Levite walking by 'on the other side of the road.' Perhaps the Levite was trying to teach the man self-reliance. Instead of letting him accept charity, he wanted the man to take responsibility for his own life and get back onto his own two feet. On the other hand, the Samaritan does the opposite, and so participates in grounding the man's co-dependency. This reading does take account of the story's elements, even though it might fail in other respects.

For these readers, the author disappears as the author's presence was never 'in' the text in the first place. The text is viewed as an autonomous object that

10 Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), 1125.

11 William Beardslee, "Poststructuralist Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning*, rev., ed. Stephen McKenzie and Stephen Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 254. Similarly John Maynard: "Declarations of freedom from intention, deaths of authors in general, were foundational to deconstruction (Roland Barthes's 'The Death of the Author'), historicism (Michel Foucault's 'What is an Author?') and reader theory alike" (*Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* [Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009], 7; author's parenthesis).

12 Simon Critchley and Timothy Mooney, "Deconstruction and Derrida," in *Continental Philosophy in the 20th Century*, ed. Richard Kearney, Routledge History of Philosophy, vol. 8 (London: Routledge, 1994), 446.

goes out into the world, free from the constraints of the author's linguistic or literary traditions, or her supposed presence. Under the central values of active imagination and creativity, readers create the brave new world of the text. But just outside this celebration, there remains that problematic notion of silencing the author's voice, and whether or not this is a good thing.

Summarizing the Problem

This discussion suggests a variety of issues that lie at the very center of interpretation. At the center lies the reader-text relation, and so how readers actually read. But this relation does not stand 'on its own,' as if in a vacuum, isolated from outside voices and influences. Readers already stand in some culture, and this influences their reading with its social institutions and ideologies. Similarly, the author stood in her culture, with all of its institutions and ideologies. Indeed, these cultures provided the author with her means of writing, even as it provides the readers with their means of reading. Each tends to assume that their way of dealing with language is natural, when in fact it is local—as indexed to the cultural moment in which each lives. One might ask, then, if readers ever 'hear' the author's voice, or if it has vanished before reading even began?

This suggests that the first issue is cultural distance. It is clear that the author writes using her grasp of language, and that readers read with their grasp of language. In this way the author reproduces her culture *in the text*, while readers reproduce their culture *out of the text*. This opens a rift between what the author planned to say and what readers actually create. The further apart these cultural perspectives are, the greater the rift. Like the old metaphor of two ships, they pass by each other in the night.

To complicate this even further, authors do not expect readers to enter the reader-text relation without their culture. They expect readers to bring their cultural biases and cultural institutions with them.¹³ They count on readers to use these in constructing and evaluating the narrative's events. When the *Gospel of Luke* brings up a 'Samaritan,' the author does not expect the reader to imagine a nice foreign person, but to be filled with contempt over this sacrilegious foreigner. When the *Gospel of Mark* talks about a windstorm, the author

13 Peter Rabinowitz writes: "Authorial reading . . . recognizes that distorting presuppositions lie at the heart of the reading process" (*Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987], 26); he calls this a "corrupted reader" (*Ibid.*).

does not expect the reader to imagine a physical wind, but to be filled with fear over a demonic power. Such emotions responses “are necessary in order . . . to understand the novel.”¹⁴ So, is there some way of resolving the rift created by cultural distance? Is it possible for the author to regain her voice in the world? Is genuine communication from the author to the reader possible?

The second issue of concern is a particular form of reader bias. This is not the bias created by one’s place in culture, as above, but that created by the reader’s motivation for reading. Reading always begins with a desire. Perhaps the reader desires to connect with an author, to find cultural traditions, or to escape the everydayness of life. If the reader is a student, he may read to obtain a high grade or to impress his classmates. The point is that reading always begins with a desire, and the desire selects a strategy—a means of approaching the text—which is designed to deliver on that desire. Both desire and method color the waters of reading, so that there is no ‘unbiased’ or ‘fair’ reading of the text, and so no ‘voice of the author’ in the first place. It is like seeing the world through colored glasses, and then trying to determine the actual colors of the world. Indeed, an unbiased reading would seem to require clear glasses, that is, a neutral space where the reader begins with no desires, expectations, or methods. So, for example, Arnold advocated for reading from a disinterested position, by refusing to utilize “any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas . . . which criticism has really nothing to do with.”¹⁵ But, of course, this is really quite impossible.

To this point, we have been noting some of the problems associated with the questions of ‘how one reads’ and ‘why one reads,’ and how these bear on interpretation. But the central issue, which underlies both questions, is that interpretation matters in the first place. If it does not matter, then one is free to read a narrative in any way one chooses. One might read *A Christmas Carol* by the form of a sonnet (a very poor sonnet, indeed!), or from the perspective of a scientist (Dickens seems to think that ghosts exists!).

On the other hand, some might suggest that it not only matters, but even lay out specific principles for consideration. For example, it probably does matter if the ‘how one reads’ results in being manipulated by gender ideology or class structure. It probably does matter if the ‘why one reads’ leads to a passive reception instead of an active engagement with the text. After all, simply

14 Jenefer Robinson, “The Emotions in Art,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 187.

15 Matthew Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 814–815. This is the Kantian assumption behind ‘free beauty.’

‘following the text’ does not sound very creative, and being ‘manipulated by the author’ does not sound very healthy. Should not readers be more active? Should not readers, at the very least, attempt to correct for the injustices of patriarchal roles and economic hegemony?

It also probably matters if reading ends up silencing the author’s voice. Otherwise it is perfectly acceptable to silence, manipulate, or marginalize any voice in the world. Only, since we are talking about a human voice, we are not talking about an It, but a person . . . a neighbor . . . a Thou. As Bakhtin has noted, in reading we “find as well a real person—one who originates spoken speech as well as the inscription and the book . . .”¹⁶ There are ethical and unethical ways of treating a voice. Surely, this suggests an issue that impinges upon the reader’s selection of desire and method.

Consequences and Ethics

Perhaps turning to some examples will help clarify these issues, especially as regards the consequences of such acts. Let us start with a simple, linguistic example of no consequence, and serially move to more serious ones. In our first example, a modern reader comes upon the following phrase in a Sherlock Holmes novel: “Just hold out while I fix the derbies.”¹⁷ At first blush, this sentence seems out of place. Holmes has just broken up a bank robbery, and now one of the police appears to be talking about hats! What are the readers to do with this?

Readers who desire to find the ‘author’s meaning’ might turn to 19th century uses of ‘derbies,’ and find that it was used for ‘handcuffs.’ But a different answer might be provided by readers who desire ‘creative engagement.’ Here ‘derbies’ might refer to horse races, and ‘fix’ to the criminal activity of influencing those races. A yet different answer might be provided by focusing on ideological structures and psychological drives: ‘derbies’ might refer to the male dominated activity of riding horses at the race, and ‘fix’ to a repressed wish for castration.¹⁸

16 M.M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 251.

17 Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Red-Headed League,” in *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, vol. 1, ed. Leslie Klinger (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 70.

18 Just in case my reader thinks I have overdrawn this case, cf. Catherine Keller and Stephen Moore’s comments on Revelation 5:1, where God holds a scroll: “Thus encircled by the

So, back to the core issue: does it really matter? Does anyone get hurt by using one or another of these reading schemes? Certainly, the first interpretation makes the most sense in the context of the novel, but the second has value as it engages one's creativity while the third recognizes the impact of social institutions and psychological drives. None of this affects the author, as he died in 1930. None of it affects other readers, as this was a private activity. None of it causes the reader to engage in immoral activity. So is there any ethical problem here?

Let us turn to a more serious example, which engages the shifting of literary conventions. Consider a reading of the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*, in which readers decide to assume the perspective of the 'bandit.' Now readers find that they, in association with the bandit, rob a merchant and so obtain a nice infusion of cash. Then they find that the person they robbed suffers no long term effects: some Samaritan puts him up at an inn and pays for his room and board. "Perhaps," our readers think, "this parable means that one can rob others without worrying about the ethics, as it does no real harm to them. God will provide a Samaritan!"

When such readers examine the broader context of this gospel, they find little to commend this interpretation. Indeed, they rather find the opposite. But why should that matter? Here we again cite Critchley and Mooney's discussion on deconstruction, where interpretation "goes against what the text wants to say or mean."¹⁹ On the positive side, these readers do creatively engage the story, do not buy into the economic or literary hegemony of the period, and do not allow their interpretation to be controlled by Western European values. But is it ethical for these readers to climb into the corporate pulpit, and proclaim that the *Gospel of Luke* encourages us to rob others?

Next let us turn to an ideological example. Imagine that Thomas Jefferson is reading *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens). He comes to the introduction of the first ghost and says: 'What kind of pre-scientific nonsense is this? Ghosts do not exist!' At which point he takes a pair of scissors and cuts that section out of the novel. He does the same with each of the following 'ghostly appearances.' When he is done, he tapes the remaining parts together, and calmly states that

divine fingers, the mystified cylindrical object looks and acts suspiciously like a phallus . . . until the mortally wounded Lamb, who, up until this moment, has been bleeding quietly and unnoticed nearby (5:6), working earnestly but unsuccessfully, it seems, at accepting his own castration, precipitously steps forward to claim the scroll as his own . . ." ("Derridapocalypse," in *Derrida and Religion*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood and Kevin Hart [New York: Routledge, 2005], 192).

19 Critchley and Mooney, "Deconstruction and Derrida," 446.

this is the ‘real’ story which ought to be read. Of course, this is an allusion to the “Jefferson Bible,” where Jefferson cut and pasted within the gospel stories.

It is clear that Jefferson has distorted the voice of the author, so that the actual author seems to disappear, and the Enlightenment biases of Jefferson now ‘write’ the texts. Indeed, it feels like these texts are the Enlightenment speaking, verifying and validating its own biases prior to any actual meaning from the author. Does it matter that an author long dead has the echo of her voice distorted? Do ethical principles change based on the physical status of those involved?

Finally, let us examine a literary example with personal consequences. Imagine that a person in a terrorist training camp writes: “I’m going to get the president,” and that Jay Leno (a comedian) says the same in a monologue on the *Late Night Show*. If interpretation does not really matter, then readers are free to apply the standard of ‘serious dialogue’ to both, and determine that both constitute a serious threat to the president. They might even report Leno to the authorities, and so open a formal investigation into Leno’s character. While Leno’s comment is clearly designed as a joke, are readers under any obligation to take it that way? Indeed, if the ‘why one reads’ is to punish Leno for some social slight, then this ‘how reading is done’ even makes sense! In the end, reason can be bent to serve the interests and needs of almost any purpose. As Horkheimer and Adorno have written: “Reason is the organ of calculation, or planning; it is neutral in regard to ends . . .”²⁰ But how these readers interpret Leno’s text does matter to Leno. Indeed, from his perspective this ‘interpreted voice’ is not his voice at all.

Moving Forward

In these examples, we have asked a variety of ethical questions that are tied to interpretation. We began with a simple example, dealing with a linguistic shift in a word (derbies), and moved through examples of creative playing, ideological distortions, and literary manipulation of the text. Virtually everyone would agree that, at some point, the ‘how’ of interpretation does matter, and crossing that line feels like an ethical problem. In other words, we are now moving from the intuition that ‘it matters,’ to ethical principles which support that intuition.

It matters how one reads, because we’re dealing with people, both as authors and readers. Now, it is possible to conceive of people as something

20 Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 88.

like ‘advanced computers.’ Computers are objects, and objects are suitable things for others to ‘work on’ or ‘use’ to their own ends. In this vein, Skinner once asked: “Is it not possible to change the social environment deliberately so that the human product will meet more acceptable specifications?”²¹ When the reader is an object, the author has every right to manipulate and mold that object as she likes, by any ideology that she selects. After all, objects—like computers—have no rights. Similarly, when the author is an object, readers have every right to manipulate and mold her text as they like, by any ideology that they select. There is no ethical violation in modifying a computer to accomplish one’s ends. In this system, authors and readers begin to look like chess pieces, and chess pieces are designed to be moved about by another. After all, the pawn and knight are just objects: they have no rights and deserve no respect.

But this is not the case if the human is a subject, a Thou with a face and a voice. In this model, the human has some type of value, and so ‘should’ be treated with care so as not to be damaged, and offered respect so as not to be exploited. When readers approach a text with this model, they attempt to avoid manipulating the text or silencing the author. But this requires the assumption that the text is the author’s voice, and so brings us back to the opening problem: readers only have the author’s words, and they supply meaning to those words. They do not have the author’s mental acts, and so never know what the author intended to say. How could readers ever create such from the marks on the page?

In the following chapters, we will attempt to address these various questions and paradoxes. Our general thesis is that writing represents a form of reproduction, where the author reproduces her culture and her subjectivity ‘in’ the text. Here we are using ‘subjectivity’ to indicate that human capacity to cross the finite horizons imposed on the individual in cultural acquisition, so as to escape the reign of ‘sameness’ and produce something that is ‘new’ or ‘other’ with respect to that culture. To the degree that the author reproduces her subjectivity in the text, it functions as the author’s voice in the world. This suggests an ethic of reading, where the author is a Thou with a voice that should not be silenced, marginalized, or manipulated. In this way, the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of reading do matter, and are built upon a foundation of ethical issues. *These ideas are critical in the construction and evaluation of every interpretive stance*—as seen in the ‘Disappearance’ sections above.

It is helpful, at the beginning of a discussion, to have a general sense of where the discussion is going and how the argument is being made. In terms

21 B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1953), 427.

of the hermeneutic circle, this is the 'whole' that helps to make sense of the individual parts. Thus, here I lay out the general design of the text in the development of this thesis.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the author. The author is a subject, and as such is capable of creating 'the new.' To the degree that the author creates newness, the text becomes her unique voice in the world. If this is not the case, then the text is only a reproduction of one's culture in ornamental clothes, and subjectivity is a hollow notion with no effects in the world.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the reading process, where readers use their subjectivity and cultural resources in creating meaning. As there are no 'laws of reading,' readers are free to use the text as they see fit. Even if the text is the author's voice, readers are still free to use the text for their own purposes, interests, and goals. But this kind of 'reader freedom' is based on the assumption that the text is an autonomous object. Literary autonomy disconnects the author from her text, so that authorial considerations on the reading process (e.g., which culture the author expected her readers to use) are removed. However, the assumptions and effects of literary autonomy are subject to serious critique.

Chapters 6 and 7 begin the process of reconnecting the text to the author. To the degree that the author reproduces her subjectivity in the text, the text is viewed as the author's voice, and as such deserves the same respect as any other human voice. This means developing a model of communication and an ethic of reading, which results in principles that contour the reader's initial approach to the text. As the author reproduces her culture and her subjectivity 'in' the text, specialized moves are appropriate to each. After examining and critiquing the traditional ways of engaging 'newness,' we turn to a path that focuses on the resources inherent to public language. Only when these language resources fail, do readers turn to more 'private' means.

Chapter 8 lays out a general reading plan for our 'model ethical reader.' This begins with an ethic of reading, where ethical principles function as side restraints on the reading process, and so offer general guidance for reading. But this is only for the initial reading of the narrative. Second readings follow the reader's other desires, and create other voices for critique and creativity. In this way we present a staged reading process, with each voice given a place at the discussion table. It is at this table—at the grand gathering of the many, with all of its tussles and conflicts—that interpretation, in its finest form, occurs.

Writing as an Intentional Act

The *written text* is the end product of an author, but the *read text* is the end product of its readers. The author(s) may supply the words of, say, the narratives in Genesis, but readers supply meaning to those words from their own cultural milieu. The distinction between the author's written narrative and the reader's read narrative suggests that two different views of the text are in play, each using the same marks on the page but with the possibility of different meanings. This raises a series of questions about the relation of the text to its meaning. Are some meanings a better characterization of the text than others? Do some points of view count for more than others? Are all interpretations equally convincing? Can the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* be about the virtues of robbing people?

Consider an analogy, where two Martians are playing a game which is being watched by a human observer. The observer notes that the Martians are using chess pieces (knight, bishop, rook) on a typical chess board. When one of the Martians is distracted, the other looks furtively about and quickly moves her bishop horizontally. At this point the human observer might well think that the Martian is cheating, and even accuse her of the same. But what if the Martian does not know the game of chess or is playing by the rules of a different game?¹ While the Martian and the observer evaluate the action differently, can the observer ethically maintain that the Martian is cheating? Is one a more complete description of the act? Are all evaluations equally valid?

This story may be applied to the writing and reading of a narrative. The author is like the Martian who engages in an act of writing, while the observer is like the reader of that narrative. Each evaluates the text from a different perspective, with some being quite similar and others quite different. *But what constitutes an adequate evaluation of the text and its meaning?* To answer this question, we must develop a deeper understanding of the processes of writing and reading. In this chapter, we will explore writing from the author's perspective (we take up the reader's perspective in Chapter 4). In particular, we will develop the notion that writing is an intentional act, meaning that the biblical authors began with the desire to say something. This 'something' is not simply a reproduction of their culture in ornamental form, but involves the author acting as a subject, and so opens the possibility of creating new meanings.

1 The inspiration for this story comes from reading Wittgenstein.

Understanding Writing

We open this chapter with one of our core assumptions: writing is an intentional act. An intentional act is characterized as being ‘about something.’ This notion began with Husserl, who wrote that a person engages language “with the intention of ‘expressing himself about something’ through its means . . . he must endow it with a sense in certain acts of mind, a sense he desires to share with his auditors.”² When a person writes, she does not simply begin scribbling words on a page, but begins with the desire to say something.

Searle develops this assumption in helpful ways. Searle suggests that people begin with a mental image or idea of what they want to do, and then design their actions based on the same. He writes: “That is, after all, why we have minds with mental states: to represent the world to ourselves; to represent how it is, how we would like it to be, how we fear it may turn out . . .”³ In other words, the author begins with a desire to say something, and then designs her work so that it does—from her point of view—say that something. She may change what she wants to say as she writes, but this simply represents a later desire to say something different.

However, is all writing intentional? There are a variety of examples that do not, on the surface, appear to be ‘about’ anything. For example, Tristan Tzara constructed his dada poems by randomly drawing words from a hat. Such a poem did not appear to be about meaning, but to be a collection of random and irrational acts. But here we must go behind the concrete poem to the desire that caused the author to form the poem in this way. Fiero gets to this issue: “If the world had gone mad, should not its art be equally mad? Dada answered with art that was the product of chance, accident, or outrageous behavior.”⁴ In such a case the poem was about the abstract concept of irrationality, as a critique of early 20th century European culture. The author’s design, of randomly picking words, was based on his desire to show irrationality, so that the abstract notion of ‘irrationality’ was the about-ness of the poem. To the degree that Tzara recognized irrationality in his poem, his design achieved its effect. The same is true for ‘stream of consciousness writing’ and ‘automatic writing,’

2 Cited in Peter Simons, “Meaning and Language,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, ed. Barry Smith and David Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 109.

3 John Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 60. This is not to say that the author represents everything to herself prior to writing, as that would leave no place for creativity and the production of ‘newness’ in the writing process, on which see below.

4 Gloria Fiero, *The Humanistic Tradition*, 3rd ed., vol. 6 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 41.

which are designed to show, respectively, the abstract notions of free association and the workings of the unconscious mind. In each case, the author who reads her own work recognizes her prior intention.

A more difficult example is the open text, which is designed to resist closure into a stable meaning, such as Barthe's "writerly text." Closely related is Belsey's "interrogative text," which "refuses a single point of view," but "brings points of view into unresolved collision or contradiction."⁵ Similarly, the Jesus-parables are often said to be open-ended, resisting closure to any particular meaning. So Donahue suggests that parables are better left "open-ended and ambiguous."⁶ All such texts are designed to force the reader in an active and creative construing of textual elements, so that the reader creates his own meaning.

In these examples, the text is designed so that readers will create multiple meanings, via the use of textual elements that resist synthesis. Here the aboutness is precisely the abstract notion of multiple meanings and resistance to closure. As Shusterman notes: "... the individuating intention might in fact be the generation of textual polysemy and multiple interpretation whose specific varieties are not already foreseen or foredetermined."⁷ To the degree that the author finds this 'resistance to closure' in her own text, she sees the text as fulfilling the design she imposed upon it. Indeed, should readers attempt to pose a stable meaning, the author will point out 'how' the design renders this impossible!

A similar notion applies to texts that are designed to be ambiguous or paradoxical. These are structured to create ambiguity, usually for the reader's contemplation or enjoyment. For example, the Gospel of John, frequently engages in deliberate ambiguity, as in the phrases "love of God" (Jn. 5:42) and "born from above" (Jn. 3:3), each of which can support multiple meanings in the Greek text.⁸ In such examples, the author chooses to omit the contextual clues

5 Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London: Methuen, 1980), 92. Also consider Bakhtin's polyphonic novel here.

6 John Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 20; cf. 17–20. While almost all modern biblical scholars admit to polysemy in the gospel parables, they vary as to the degree, as contoured by the selection and valuation of cultural context, literary function, and historical concerns.

7 Richard Shusterman, "Interpreting with Pragmatist Intentions," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 170. Cf. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 107–108.

8 Moisés Silva concludes that these are examples of deliberate ambiguity, given the "considerable other evidence that the author enjoyed word plays" (*Biblical Words & Their Meaning* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983], 149). Similarly, C.K. Barrett writes on Jn. 3:3: "... *anōthen* is capable of two meanings and here it probably has both" (*The Gospel According to St. John*, 2nd

that normally select for one or another of a word's uses. Indeed, Rabinowitz suggests that authors

... often attempt to communicate ambiguity itself—thus, even readers in the same interpretive community may well see different things in *The Trial*, since Kafka was consciously trying to confuse.⁹

Another type of writing, that does not appear to be about anything, is the post-modern novel. Consider the novella, *In a Grove*, where the author shows an event from several contradictory perspectives.¹⁰ This might appear to foreclose the possibility of meaning, so that the narrative does not appear to be about anything. But at an abstract level, the narrative is about the notion that no privileged viewing place exists, so that one only possesses a variety of perspectives. The narrative's design makes this point clear, for while multiple perspectives are developed, none are identical and none are privileged!

Another limit case includes authors who engage in the use of nonsense words, as occurs in Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*.¹¹ This design suggests that the author's desire was to rhyme, with less emphasis on linguistic content. In the prelinguistic stage of a child's development, this is called 'sound play,' and these babbling sounds suggest that the poem is about pleasure in the repetition of sound patterns.¹² To the degree that the author finds such in her poem, she recreates the about-ness that she designed the text to create.

ed. [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978], 205. Others, such as Raymond Brown, recognize the "technique of misunderstanding," but nevertheless suggest that Jesus' use of the term was not ambiguous (*The Gospel According to John, I–XII*, 2nd ed., The Anchor Bible, vol. 29 [Garden City: Doubleday, 1985], 130–131).

9 Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 37. Also cf. Kaye Mitchell: "... he (the author) may wish to pervert and obfuscate meaning, in which case his meaning just is this obfuscation" (*Intention and Text: Towards an Intentionality of Literary Form* [London: Continuum, 2008], 30; parenthesis mine).

10 Ryunosuke Akutagawa, "In a Grove," in *Philosophy: An Introduction Through Literature*, ed. Lowell Kleiman and Stephen Lewis (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1990), 85–90.

11 Lewis Carroll, *Jabberwocky*, in *The Top 500 Poems*, ed. William Harmon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 747. Carroll does explain some of these words, such as 'gyre' (old English for 'dog'), but this does little to help the average reader who simply delights in the feast of rhyme and meter.

12 On "sound play," cf. Kirsten Malmkjær, "Language acquisition," in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær (London: Routledge, 1991), 242.

A final example occurs when a child writes random letters on a page, in imitation of an adult. Yet even here an intention is at work: the child-author is attempting to behave like her parents, so that her 'writing' is about acting like an adult. Here the meaning is conveyed as an action, which shows the child's behavioral learning. Once the parents recognize this, they do not attempt to make linguistic sense of the child's writing, but take delight in the mimicry of their own behavior.

Our conclusion, in all of these examples, is that writing is intentional in nature: the author represents some about-ness to herself, and then instantiates this about-ness in the text—though we must wait until the next chapter to see how this occurs. Further, this conclusion suggests that narratives tend to be organic (connected, tied together) *from the author's point of view*. She sees the narrative as organized by her about-ness, which functions as a kind of organizing center. Despite the fact that words have social histories, the author engages language, as Bakhtin notes, by "forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents . . ." ¹³ Even the postmodern novel, with its many perspectives, suggests the totality of 'reality is fragmented.' It boldly proclaims that the reader only has competing perspectives, and gathers all of the narrative pieces under this (non)center.

The 'How' of Intentional Acts

While we have suggested that writing is an intentional act, this does not tell us much about the act itself. What is an intentional act? All writing originates in an intentional state, that is, in a desire to *say/do something*. When this desire results in an action, the action is in some way an outworking of that desire. The connection between the desire and the action suggests a form of causation, which Searle calls "intentional causation." ¹⁴ Intentional causation occurs when the person imagines the something she wants to say/do in her mind, and then

13 M.M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 292. On Bakhtin's notion of textual unity, from the author's viewpoint, cf. Michael Vines, *The Problem of Markan Genre*, *Academia biblica* 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 47–48, 50–52. He cites Bakhtin: "A given work can be a product of a collective effort . . . but in all cases we hear in it a unified creative will, a definite position, to which it is possible to react dialogically" (*Ibid.*, 52). We will address Bakhtin's notion of polyphony later.

14 For Searle's discussion, see Chapter 5. On the relation of creativity to representation, see below.

uses this mental image to design the act that follows. She represents this ‘something’ to herself, and then models her actions upon the representation itself.

The representational element is of key importance here. Once this ‘something’ is imagined, the person can begin to arrange the elements of her world to make the world look like that image. Searle calls this a world-to-mind direction of fit. This representational element also defines the end point for that desire: the desire is fulfilled when the world comes to look like the mental image. Searle calls this end point the “conditions of satisfaction” for that desire.¹⁵

Let us apply this to the topic at hand. The author begins with a desire to write a text, which both says something (e.g., the meaning) and does something (e.g., creates an event). She represents these to herself, by imagining the characters, plots, themes, genre, and the like. All of this happens, in a cursory or abbreviated form, prior to setting the pen to paper. She then sets to reproducing this design in the text, so that the resulting narrative fits her mental image. For example, when this author desires to write a parable, she imagines the normal form (a fictional narrative, a genre marker, a metaphor), as well as the concrete elements for that form (characters, plot). The author may not choose to use all of these elements, but she will use sufficient elements and cues so as to get her readers to treat this story as a parable (recognize it as a fictional narrative that functions as an extended metaphor). For the author, this design is purposeful, in that it is structured to move readers in a particular way or down a particular path.¹⁶ The author anticipates that any competent reader who follows this design will recreate the characters, plot, and genre that she imagined. But she does not anticipate that the reader will treat her parable as non-fiction, and so go out in search of those bandits (*Parable of the Good Samaritan*). If—when she reads her own text—she recognizes this plot, in this genre, and with these

15 John Searle writes: “In each case the intentional state with a direction of fit has conditions of satisfaction, and we can say that the intentional state is a representation of its conditions of satisfaction . . .” (“Intentionality (1),” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Samuel Guttenplan [Malden: Blackwell, 1994], 382).

16 Literary criticism, following Kant, draws a distinction between ‘purposeful’ and ‘purposive.’ ‘Purposive’ involves the observer’s grasp of the inward workings and cohesion of the work of art, that is, the recognition that the work is an organic whole. For Kant, the beauty of a flower arises from the recognition of its purposiveness, and not from its instrumental use (see further in Chapter 5). In literary theory, this was generally tied to the work’s form, which organized the various elements into an organic whole, and yet seemed to have no purpose (doesn’t form concepts or project agendas). Cf. Denis Dutton, “Kant and the Conditions of Artistic Beauty,” *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 34, no. 3 (July 1994): 226–241. ‘Purposeful,’ on the other hand, involves the reason for which the art was created or the meaning it was designed to create: it is reducible to concepts and agendas.

characters, then her design will have succeeded in producing the narrative that she imagined. In Searle's terms, her narrative will have met her conditions of satisfaction, even though this is only for her reading of her own text. In this way the author's actions are not random, but oriented with purpose and direction.

Unfortunately, this simplified writing scheme fails to mirror the actual process of writing, and several of these complicating factors need to be taken into account. Here we will address four notions, as these are central to our discussion of who actually writes, and so whose intentional objects are being communicated. In summary, these are first, that it is not the author who speaks, but an implied author; second, that the author may actually be multiple authors and editors, opening the possibility of multiple voices in the text; third that the author may shift the intentional objects (meaning) as she writes, resulting in different types of intentional objects in the text; and fourth, that creative processes do not rely on 'representation,' and so bear a complicated relation to intentional acts.

The first complicating factor deals with issues in communication. In the narrative communication model, there are steps between the historical author and the flesh-and-blood reader, so that the author never directly communicates to the reader. In this section we will address the authorial side of this model (for the reader's side, see Chapter 6).

Wayne Booth popularized the notion that the author does not write the text directly, as if the text were a sincere outpouring of her convictions and beliefs (a Romantic notion). Rather, the author creates "an implied version of 'himself' . . . various official versions of himself" for the writing process.¹⁷ This construct has two major manifestations, depending on whether one is examining it from the author's perspective (writing) or the reader's side (reading). When viewed from the author's perspective, it is a projection that the author creates of herself—a kind of second self—which writes for an audience, with attitudes and beliefs that may not be shared by the actual author. So Booth observes: "Everyone knows that authors must take on roles, that they need not be 'sincerely' wedded to particular characteristics in order to portray them sympathetically."¹⁸ According to Kindt and Müller, who postulate a variety of implied author types, this is the type that participates in the communication

17 Wayne Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 70–71; cf. 429.

18 Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 254. Cf. Peter Rabinowitz: "... from this perspective, the implied author is *not* a mere theoretical abstraction created by the reader, it is (assumed to be) something created (at least partly consciously) by the real author in the same way that he or she creates characters

process, by functioning as “a sender in the process of literary communication.”¹⁹ This version of the implied author is a quasi-textual construct, as it is formed in the author’s mind for the purpose of communication, but with behavior manifested ‘in’ the text. Henceforth, we will identify this as the ‘implied authorA.’

When viewed from the reader’s perspective, the implied author is the reader’s construction of the person who appears to have written the text. Moore calls this the “complex image of the real author that the reader infers as s/he reads—a selecting, structuring, and presiding intelligence, discerned indirectly in the text . . .”²⁰ As the reader constructs this implied author from the text, it has no connection to any real author, but only exists ‘in’ the text. It is “a postulated subject to which aspects of the text are attributed.”²¹ Henceforth, we will identify this as the ‘implied authorR.’ In this section, we will focus on the author’s perspective (implied authorA), and turn to the reader’s perspective (implied authorR) in Chapter 6.

The author does not write for herself, unless she is writing private notes or a diary, but ‘for’ and ‘to’ an imagined audience. This causes her to shift, ever so slightly, from her view of the world (symbolic universe, cognitive maps, social institutions) to their view: it is designed for their understanding of the world.²² Indeed, the author does not even write about attitudes and beliefs with which she necessarily concurs, or about characters and events that actually exist. She is engaged in creating the imaginary, both in producing a story-world and in making that story-world accessible to her intended reader, and so may access

and plots” (“‘The Absence of Her Voice from that Concord’: The Value of the Implied Author,” *Style* 45, no. 1 [Spring 2011]: 104; author’s parentheses).

19 In Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller’s classification of implied author types, this is the “implied author as a participant in communication” (“Six Ways Not to Save the Implied Author,” *Style* 45, no. 1 [Spring 2011]: 69, accessed April 14, 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost). Most of their types represent variants of the two types we present. Marie-Laure Ryan also recognizes different functions under the umbrella of ‘implied author,’ including the communicative one presented here (“Meaning, Intent, and the Implied Author,” *Style* 45, no. 1 [Spring 2011]: 34–35, accessed May 13, 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost). Ryan ends up rejecting the necessity of such a construct. However, I find that it is a necessity for the actual author, who creates this role in order to utilize the language conventions of her intended audience.

20 Stephen Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 46.

21 Kindt and Müller, “Six Ways,” 70.

22 This is Ricoeur’s “mimesis1” (see below). The author begins with her own mimesis1, but when she functions as an implied authorA, may access a different mimesis1 as tied to her intended audience, so as to make the text understandable to that audience. She uses this to configure the story-world (mimesis2).

beliefs and convictions that are quite the opposite her own (e.g., a modern author writing fantasy).

This suggests that authors do not rigidly hold onto their existing self or view of the world, but forsake both under their interest of saying something (the imaginary) to someone (the intended audience). Such is easily recognized in the ancient historian's recording of speeches, which were often constructed by the historian in that person's style: "... speeches composed for historical works were not based on actual speeches but were rhetorical compositions judged 'suitable' (*to prepon*) for the person to whom they were ascribed..."²³ Similarly with the authors of ancient pseudepigraphal texts (e.g., books of Enoch), where the author took on the persona and expected style of a commanding figure from the past. In doing so, the author used a literary means for garnering special authority for her works, in an age "marked by widespread nostalgia for the past..."²⁴ In all of these, the author utilized a non-sincere image of herself, an implied authorA, in order to imagine and write the text.

This suggests that the author, who employs an implied authorA, writes from an interested position, in order to create an about-ness that is neither objective nor unbiased, even from her point of view. In short, the implied authorA is a heuristic device for explaining how an actual author adopts a persona, literary or otherwise, in writing her text. The distance between the two is especially evident when she creates an imaginary world that she does not accept as her actual world, or writes to an audience that is different from her own.

This discussion allows us to more clearly define the term: 'the voice of the author.' It does not refer to any actual voice, as the actual author is not using her voice, even though she is the subject that creates the implied authorA. Rather, we use it to suggest that an actual subject created an implied authorA to shape this text, which means that along this discontinuous and tortuous path, there is still a subject (Thou) that must be taken into account. It emphasizes that a subject lurks somewhere behind the making of marks on the page. Although the implied authorA may be the one creating 'meaning,' it is only a shadowy extension of the real self—a role that has been adopted—and so cannot be turned into an 'It' that has no value or rights.

A second complicating factor is that the actual author, as the subject lurking behind the text, may not have been a single person. This is especially the case for biblical texts, where oral transmission and performances, as further

23 David Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 93; author's parenthesis.

24 John Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 37; cf. 39–40.

complicated by written editions, suggests the hand of multiple authors and editors. Such is not unique to biblical texts. Nelles discusses this problem in the text of *Beowulf*, where multiple scribes and editors participated in the final version: "The historical author is thus composed of at least seven flesh-and-blood people, among whom the initial creator is by far the least concrete."²⁵ But what does this mean, for our notion of the 'voice of the author' and the 'implied authorA'?

To begin with, it means that the reader recognizes different strands because each successive speaker, writer, and performer re-authors the text. This is especially the case in oral transmission, where each successive performer instantiates new bits of meaning in her performance. The gospel parables are a case in point. As Scott notes: "All extant parables ascribed to Jesus show the traces of performances by others."²⁶ These additions generally relate to shifts in audience, so that each audience receives a performance adapted to their circumstances. As Ong notes, "... its meaning includes its interaction with and adjustment to the real situation that now elicits it."²⁷

In short, each new performance is not simply a repetition of the text, as if it were objectively re-repeated, but represents an entanglement of text, performer, and audience. In particular, it is an entanglement of the performer who learned the text by watching someone else's performance, the performer who participates in the events of the text, the performer who addresses the situation of the present audience, and the performer who perceives her audience's responses. The case is similar for editors of a text. Editors work within the text, participating in the events of the text even as they are modifying them, so that the processes of participation and modification are entangled. These acts of performance and editing result in new bits that shift not only the performance, but also the audience's reception, producing meanings that may be quite unconnected to the original composition. So Zumthor writes:

In every exercise of oral poetry, the role of the performer counts more than that of the composer(s). Not that it eclipses it entirely, but it is

25 William Nelles, "Historical and Implied Authors and Readers," *Comparative Literature*, 45.1 (Winter 1993): 23.

26 Bernard Scott, *Hear Then the Parable* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 40; cf. 65. David Gowler traces these intertextual dialogues, in a Bakhtinian way, through Hellenistic social world (" 'At His Gate Lay a Poor Man': A Dialogic Reading of Luke 16:19–31," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 3 [Fall 2005]: 249–265, esp. 258–260, accessed May 7, 2014, ATLASerials, Religion Series, EBSCOhost).

27 Walter Ong, "Text as Interpretation: Mark and After," *Semeia* 39 (1987): 12.

apparent in the performance that it contributes all the more to determining auditory, corporeal, and emotive reactions of the audience . . .²⁸

For our discussion, this notion of entanglement means that the text has elements from multiple authors. However, this does not mean that the implied authorA is necessarily multiple, and it is certainly not *from the author's perspective*. This brings us back to the notion that writing is an intentional act. Each author, editor, or performer begins their performance with intentional objects in mind, which each conceives of as 'the meaning' of the text. Each attempts to conform its performance to those objects (a world-to-mind direction of fit). When each successive author/editor reads her final product, she grasps the text as manifesting her about-ness. Indeed, she may conceive of her performance as simply repeating the about-ness that she experienced when she was in the audience—with a few clarifying additions.

But whether clarifying, correcting, or adding to the earlier performance, each performer does not grasp their text as a collection of disparate voices from each prior editor, author, or tradition, but as organic—as centered on her intentional objects. The author could organize her text about multiple non-coherent voices, as occurs in post-modern novels and polyphonic novels, but in these cases the author is simply organizing her text about some abstract about-ness (non-coherence, fragmentation, dialogue, or freedom).

While each successive author reads her piece as organic, with all parts fitting into her about-ness, they are rarely wholly successful in this task. Indeed, readers may recognize the hand of multiple implied authorRs, as tied to each one's preference for certain vocabularies, use of different cultural moments, and varied use of themes. To readers, this suggests that the text has multiple implied authorRs and intended audiences. The degree to which these are recognizable depends upon the skill of the final author/editor in suppressing prior voices, something that feminists have long pointed out (erasure of the female voice by a later editor of the text). When the final author/editor is highly skilled, these traces may be sufficiently insignificant as to be undetectable. Here readers create the illusion of a single implied authorR. Such results in Chatman's evaluation: "There is always an implied author, though there might not be a single real author in the ordinary sense: the narrative may have been composed by committee . . ."²⁹

28 Paul Zumthor, *Oral Poetry: An Introduction*, trans. Kathy Murphy-Judy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 168.

29 Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 149.

On the other hand, less skilled editors may leave a prior implied authorR largely intact. As Richardson notes: "Literature and popular culture are rife with collaborations that reveal their different styles, divergent tools, and disparate sensibilities."³⁰ In biblical studies, we need only examine a gospel parable with an explanatory attachment that does not match the parable. In the *Parable of the Workers* (Mt. 20:1–16), the parable's structure is about egalitarian behavior, but the explanation is about the special value of the 'last ones.' But even in these cases, the final editor engaged the text—reading it, participating in it, and adding to it—as an intentional act. She attempted to form the design as purposive, that is, as organic, as impressed with coherence. She attempted to reduce other voices by submerging the various conversations under her synthesis, so that the words are oriented by her point of view and toward her intentional objects. However, this is only the author's evaluation, which is the orientation of this chapter.

In the end, readers have no direct access to the actual author or the implied authorA, regardless of whether or not these are multiple. They begin with the marks on the page. From these they may recognize conflicting voices, as in the two creation stories of Genesis, multiple Isaiahs, and the different endings to Mark. While our discussion on how readers deal with edited materials must wait for Chapter 8, we can here suggest that unless there are clear blocks of material, as in our examples here, we generally look for the intentional objects of the final author/editor. When reading a novel that has undergone multiple editions, readers generally do not look for the intentional objects of the first edition, but the final one.

The third complicating factor, in the process of writing, is that writing is a rather messy affair, with ends that shift and adjustments towards new ends. Indeed, authors often talk about how their narratives change across the time of writing. This is because the author's *initial intentional state and objects are not necessarily her final ones*. An author's desires and designs may change in the process of writing, and the acts of writing will shift to reflect these. This does not mean that the final product is necessarily without coherence, as if put together piecemeal by sequentially unconnected intentional states. Nor does it necessarily result in "a palimpsest of intentions so thickly layered that,

30 Brian Richardson, "Introduction. The Implied Author: Back from the Grave, or Simply Dead Again," *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 5. He notes that when authorial collaborations fail, it "is because they are not able to convincingly merge their sensibility with that of the implied author they mimic" (Ibid., 6).

in regard to intention, it may easily be unreadable.”³¹ Not only are the shifts generally connected in the author’s mind, but in her revisions of the text, she generally draws the text’s elements around some about-ness. The author may not be successful in this task, from the reader’s point of view, but we are only addressing the author’s reading of her own text here.

Finally, the process of writing involves issues of creativity. Authors often have the experience of realizing new elements which seem to arise unbidden, and which do not conform to their original design or about-ness. This suggests two parallel issues. First, authors use creative processes where an about-ness may not appear to be present, at least not in its final form. Here the author engages in the creative process of world-building, but without knowing what world is actually being built. The intentional object (the world that will be built) is not yet present, despite the fact that the author is constructing it. In the next chapter, we will characterize these creative processes, as innovative uses of the hermeneutic circle, supervenience, and divergent thinking. However, our point here is that these processes are still intentional in nature: they have their own purposeful design, and their output is characterized by the contours of that design.

For example, one mechanism utilizes the hermeneutic circle, where the author uses the opening elements of a work to imagine a new “whole,” which is different from the one she originally imagined. However, this new end is still connected to the existing elements of the narrative, so that the new end is not completely random, but contoured by the process which produced it. In short, these processes may result in ‘new-ness’ and ‘world-building,’ but each still conforms to the about-ness—at the abstract level—of the process which produced it.

Second, authors may have thoughts that seem to come out of nowhere, as if unconnected to any about-ness or representation. However, this is predicated on the notion that thought only occurs in one’s natural language, so that the about-ness is always conscious in nature. This is by no means certain. It may be that ‘thinking’ at least partially occurs in languages that are prior to consciousness. Indeed, Mitscherling suggests that “pre-linguistic and non-linguistic experience is meaningful, significant, and therefore ‘understandable’ . . .”, and concludes that humans “do not ‘think’ in words at all. We use words to communicate our thoughts . . .”³² Similarly Meissner notes that the prelinguistic child

31 John Maynard, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009), 50.

32 Jeff Mitscherling, *Aesthetic Genesis* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010), 128, 129. Mitscherling is responding to Gadamer’s claim that “Being that can be understood is

has “operations that are preverbal and indicate the degree to which a child can think and even understand the language of others before he acquires his own use of language.”³³

Let us consider this with the metaphor of a computer language. A computer uses multiple levels of language, ranging from ones of which users are aware (typing a sentence using a word processing program), to ones of which they are wholly unaware (assembly and machine languages). The word processing program is finally rooted in a binary language which has the compositional elements of ‘1’ and ‘0,’ even though users are unaware of that language or its syntax.

In a similar way, it may be that human minds are constantly running a ‘machine language,’ with compositional units of which they are unaware. Conscious thoughts would then represent the translation of that language into the proper compositional units of a higher level language (words, grammar). A parallel notion, functioning at the level of syntax, has already been posed by Fodor, with his ‘language of thought.’ Adams summarizes:

A very good reason to think that LOT (language of thought) is not a public, natural language is that we need the resources of a language in order to learn a first natural language, viz. hypothesis formation about what words and phrases mean and confirmation procedures to test those hypotheses...³⁴

In our model, then, new content does not spring out of a disconnected ‘nowhere,’ as if springing into existence *ex nihilo*. It is the result of intentional processes operating at conscious, pre-conscious, and even unconscious, levels.

language” (Ibid., 128). Fred Adams notes two other objections, namely that “we have to be able to think in order to learn our first natural language” and the fact that “non-verbal infants and animals think” (“Thoughts and Their Contents: Naturalized Semantics,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Stephen Stich and Ted Warfield [Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003], 145, 166 fn.5). In the end, our conclusion is that of Colin McGinn: “The indicated conclusion seems to be that we simply do not possess a conception of thought that makes its real nature theoretically comprehensible...” (“Thought,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Samuel Guttenplan [Malden: Blackwell, 1994], 588–589).

33 W.W. Meissner, “The Role of Language in the Development of the Self I: Language Acquisition,” *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 25, no. 1 (2008): 37, see fn. 19, accessed May 18, 2014, doi:10.1037/0736-9735.25.1.26.

34 Adams, “Thoughts and Their Contents,” 144–145; parenthesis mine.

Intentionality and Subjectivity

The notion that writing is an intentional act brings us to our second core notion, that the author is a subject. Writing has the about-ness of an intentional act, but that about-ness still comes from somewhere. There is no doubt that part of it arises from the author's culture. The author is partially composited by her existing cultural institutions, and, indeed, she reproduces these in every act of writing. Ricoeur calls this "mimesis," where the author uses her own background of "human actions, symbols, and temporality."³⁵ However, if the author is a subject, then she is also capable of creating a newness that is not reducible to existing cultural objects. When she reproduces this newness in her intentional act of writing, her narrative contains objects that are irreducible to existing culture. In this way writing is characterized as both a reproduction of existing culture and the author's subjectivity. But how do we get to the notion that the author is a subject?

Modern literary theory has tended to assume that authors are not subjects, but objects that are manipulated by language and culture. Heidegger, upon whom so many of these movements are founded, writes that the human "has been brought into its own by language, so that it (the human) remains given over or appropriated to the nature of language . . ."³⁶ Similarly de Man has been summarized as saying that the very notion of intention "is something which has been taken out of the hands of individual human subjects and which is now predicated of language itself . . ."³⁷ This suggests that the author does not write out of her subjectivity, but only parrots language and culture, as if these were the 'subjects' that write the author. So Barthes can suggest that literature is only a repetition of the past: "The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture . . . the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original."³⁸

This trend is founded upon the assumption that language determines one's experience of the world, as language provides the categories for human reality.

35 Gregory Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics in Motion* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002), 111.

36 Martin Heidegger, "Language," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1132; parenthesis mine.

37 Mitchell, *Intention and Text*, 144. She cites de Man: "... it follows from the rhetorical nature of literary language that the cognitive function resides in the language and not the subject . . ." (Ibid., 143).

38 Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1468.

One place to begin an examination of this assumption is the *Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis*. This hypothesis, from the anthropology literature, states that a person's natural language "sets up a series of categories which act as a pair of grid spectacles through which s/he views the world; it categorizes experience for the speakers of the language."³⁹ Language and its categories, which are indexed to a particular cultural moment, are inculcated in every person at an early age. These form the categories through which that person 'takes in' experiences of the world, and so form the structure of reality for that person. One cannot think about the world except as provided by these.

Accordingly, the early Foucault suggested that language and culture construct a 'subject position' or 'author position' that the author occupies. As Foucault writes: "In short, the subject (and its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analyzed as a complex and variable function of discourse."⁴⁰ Maynard summarizes this trend: "New Historicism and American Cultural Studies...spin a web of cultural determinism to replace author determination."⁴¹ Here the notion of an author as a *subject who writes out of her subjectivity* is a myth. The author is dead: language, culture, ideology, and other texts have replaced her as the writing subject. A text can be discussed

39 Kirsten Malmkjær, "Mentalist linguistics," in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær (London: Routledge, 1991), 306. Cf. discussion by John Lucy, "Linguistic Relativity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997): 291–312, esp. 294–295. I'm presenting the "strong version" of this hypothesis.

40 Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1636. Corey Anton and Valerie Peterson summarize: "For Foucault, discourse is a regulated way of speaking and acting within a system that offers 'subject positions' to speaking persons... a person takes a place in the social order, making sense of the world from this vantage point while also being subjected to discourses common to it..." ("Who Said What: Subject Positions, Rhetorical Strategies and Good Faith," *Communication Studies* 54, no. 4 [Winter 2003]: 406, accessed Feb. 2, 2007, doi: 10.1080/10510970309363300). The later Foucault shifted towards the notion of self-creation, using notions of the "technologies of the self." Diane Skinner summarizes: "The subject is a reflexive human being who, though thinking, constitutes both the objectifying and subjectifying modes of action, and is constituted by them" ("Foucault, Subjectivity and Ethics: Towards a Self-forming Subject," *Organization* 20, no. 6 [Nov. 2013]: 909; accessed May 6, 2014, doi: 10.1177/1350508412460419).

41 Maynard, *Literary Intention*, 74. Cf. Duncan Salkeld, "New Historicism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 69. While new historicism tends towards a cultural determinism, the placement of the individual in conflicting streams of cultural thought/practice does open the space for a kind of limited subjectivity.

without reference to the human author, as there is no human-as-subject in the first place.

However, this characterization is subject to critique. Our critique begins with the realization that language and culture *do not constitute the person's most basic engagement with the world*, and so do not necessarily determine an author's reality or what the author writes. The prelinguistic child does experience the world, though not through the categories of culture or natural language. The child's first engagement with the world is through sensation, which results in primordial experiences. Now sensation is not taken in directly, as the older empiricist tradition (Locke) suggested, but it is also not taken in through the categories of culture, as these have not yet been learned. Rather, it appears that the brain has innate processing capabilities which initially manipulate the sense data. Examples of such innate processing go by the names of the phi phenomenon and the cutaneous rabbit.⁴² In each, the brain supplies information that is not part of the actual sense data, but alters the sense data in predictable and universal ways.

The mind also manipulates the raw sense data by filtering it through 'innate categories.' These form one's initial, and prelinguistic, interpretation of sensations. Kant began this discussion, by suggesting that all sense data is processed by innate categories, such as space, time, and causation. They are a kind of innate knowledge of the world with which humans are born. For example, Landau notes how deaf children still develop a sense of language, and blind children still develop a sense of space. She concludes that humans "come to the task of learning prepared with some initial biases, schemas, and structures which will be used to filter, analyze, and reorganize data provided by the environment."⁴³

These materials suggest that a child's initial engagement with the world is not through language or culture, but through sensation, as modified by innate processing and innate knowledge. But if the person's initial engagement is

42 Cf. Rüdiger Flach and Patrick Haggard: "In summary, then, this encouraged us to believe that the CRE (cutaneous rabbit effect) is a genuine spatiotemporal illusion that, presumably, arises in an early, tactile map" ("The Cutaneous Rabbit Revisited," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 32, no. 3 [June 2006]: 729; my parenthesis).

43 Barbara Landau, "Innate knowledge," in *A Companion to Cognitive Science*, ed. William Bechtel and George Graham (Malden: Blackwell, 1998), 589. William Seager and David Bourget suggest that these features may provide "an objective ground for our experiences," even though they may not be "actually instantiated in the world" ("Representationalism about Consciousness," in *A Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, ed. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider [Malden: Blackwell, 2007], 267).

through sensation, then what is the relationship between these sensations and a later-learned language? Nietzsche addresses this relation under the rubric of metaphor: “The stimulation of a nerve is first translated into an image: the first metaphor! The image is then imitated by a sound: a second metaphor!”⁴⁴ In other words, sensation is the primary experience, and it is not conditioned—at least initially—by language. Rather, language becomes metaphorically attached to the primordial experience. This attachment begins when experience is attached to observable behavior. As Wittgenstein observes: “A child has hurt himself and he cries; *and then adults talk to him* and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences.”⁴⁵

This sets up a series of relations, between the child’s sensation (pain) and the child’s observable behavior (crying), and then between the child’s observable behavior (crying), and the adult’s response in language (‘ouch’). In each of these relations, two kinds of processes are going on. On the one hand, there is a metaphorical process, where one kind of thing (‘ouch’) stands in for a different kind of thing (pain). On the other hand, there is a temporal sequencing, where one kind of thing is a response to another kind of thing (the linguistic ‘ouch’ is a response to crying, and the crying is a response to the sensation). Thus, the word ‘ouch’ is not only a metaphor for the sensation, but is temporally later than the sensation. For the child, language is secondarily attached—metaphorically and temporally—to the more primordial experience.

The critical point for our discussion is that language, at least in early childhood, does not define these relations or impose its categories upon human experience. The initial relations are prelinguistic, and are tied to human sensation, as mediated by innate processing. Only later will the child attach linguistic metaphors to those sensations and experiences. Mitscherling’s group draws out this implication:

But if Nietzsche is correct, this linguistic world is not so fundamental after all, for beneath it lies the more primordial realm of ‘primitive metaphor’ and human imagination, a realm that conditions the very possibility of the emergence of language itself . . .⁴⁶

44 Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 877.

45 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Kenny (Malden: Blackwell, 1994), 144; my italics. Also cf. Wittgenstein’s “tooth-ache” example (*Ibid.*, 147). On language acquisition, see Meissner, “The Role of Language,” 26–46.

46 Jeff Mitscherling, Tanya Ditommaso, and Aref Nayed; *The Author’s Intention* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004), 16.

Indeed, these authors go on to state that brute sensation and metaphorical thinking are “the ontological condition of language.”⁴⁷

Habermas generates a similar analysis. Leaning on the theories of Piaget, he begins with innate knowledge as the base for the construction of language. He concludes:

... there are ample indications that language is merely ‘superimposed’ on categories such as space, time, causality, and substance, and on rules which govern the combination of symbols according to the laws of formal logic—both of which have a prelinguistical foundation.⁴⁸

This discussion suggests that humans are not the prisoner of language. Rather, natural language and culture are contingent upon prior human experiences, constituting initially—and initially only—a response to the human’s sensations and experiences of the world. This has two critical implications for our discussion. First, it means that the child’s most basic engagement with the world is subjective experience. Language does not condition or interpret these primordial experiences. The child is, from the beginning, functioning as a subject who uses language ... not the other way around. Second, it means that the child’s language is metaphorically attached to her experiences, so that these experiences determine word usage. At this early stage (the ‘one-word stage’ of language development, along with its variants), a child’s words ‘mean’ the content of her experiences. She does not have a ‘language system’ (*langue*), as does the adult, where word usage is determined by relationships within the system. This means that the child’s language is not subject to the linguistic deferral of that system, but remains tied to the experience itself. As such, her language *is already infected with subjective components*. We will turn to the importance of this fact below.

The relation of the human to language becomes more complicated in the following stages of language development. The human continues to attach words to her experiences, even as she is learning language as a theoretical system (*langue*). In the former, ‘words’ are attached to experiences, while in the

47 Ibid.

48 Jürgen Habermas, “On Hermeneutics’ Claim to Universality,” in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 300. Habermas calls these prelinguistic elements “paleosymbols” (Ibid., 308). This is also the place to suggest that language itself is based on innate categories and an innate compositional syntax which exists prior to any natural language, as suggested by Fodor (language of thought) and Chomsky (language center).

latter ‘words’ are attached to other words. Both processes continue together and mutually affect the acquisition of the other.

One place to view this intersection is, again, in the *Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis*. In one of Whorf’s examples, Whorf noted how a worker’s grasp of the word ‘empty’ carried the language category of “null and void, negative, inert.”⁴⁹ When a worker was told that gasoline drums were empty, he applied the category of ‘inert’ and cut into one with a torch. However, while these drums had no liquid gas, they still contained gas fumes and exploded. Whorf rightly concluded that the worker’s behavior was based on the categories brought in by language, as if these were reality for that person. The categories of ‘empty’ determined the worker’s grasp of the world, and so how he acted upon that world.

However, it is critical to note that, when the worker applied his torch, the drums still exploded. Reality resisted his language and its categories. The worker could state that the drum was empty and believe that it was inert, but the vapors still ignited. So Whorf concluded: “... we always assume that the linguistic analysis . . . reflects reality better than it does.”⁵⁰ In short, the categories of our language and culture may at times be resisted by the brute facts of our experience. These experiences cause us to reform our grasp of the categories posed by language, so that we reshape language based on our experiences. Indeed, the worker never understood ‘empty’ in the same way, and so never acted upon the ‘empty’ drum in the same way. Human experience actively reshapes language.

This discussion suggests that language development is a reciprocal process: *the human is located by a language that the human is also in the process of locating*. Language shapes the human experiences of the world, by providing certain categories of reality through which humans experience their world. But human experiences also shape language, so that language functions as a response to and characterization of those experiences. As Johnston writes: “The consensus among discourse analysts is that discourse is both shaped by and helps to shape the human lifeworld . . .”⁵¹ Or even more sharply, Hirsh

49 Benjamin Whorf, “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language,” in *Critical Theory Since 1965*, ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1986), 710.

50 Ibid., 712. Similarly Mitscherling: “It may indeed be the case that certain forms and certain objects come into being and persist only where certain cognitive activities are involved—but this is not to reduce the object of that act . . . to the consciousness of the subject” (*Aesthetic Genesis*, 116).

51 Barbara Johnstone, *Discourse Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Blackwell, 2008), 33.

writes: "Just as language constitutes and colors subjectivity, so does subjectivity color language."⁵²

Our conclusion is that humans are not wholly the product of their cultural discourses, but that they are subjects and they use a language which remains infected with subjective components. Neither the self nor the self's writing is a simple reiteration of culture (we will explore the notion of 'the self' in Chapter 4). Art is not wholly an ornamental re-presentation of biochemistry or social institutions, as if these were the subjects who 'wrote' or 'created' or 'boundaried' humans. Such is a reductionistic description.⁵³ Rather, it appears that *one's subjective experience of the world* and *the shaping capacity of one's language, culture, and psychological drives*, are entangled in the development of the self. The synthetic processes that bring these together, in constructing a new moment, require a reciprocity among these, and not a simple privileging of any one. This suggests a Hegelian dialectical process, where the thesis (humans are subjects that use language) and antithesis (humans are objects that are used by language) are brought together in a synthesis that bears witness to the validity of both components. The fact that this synthesis may result in the most irresolvable antinomies is no objection: the reality of the self is just that complex. Mitscherling is frank on the subject:

... it seems that the true extent of the relation between linguistic concepts and our most primitive engagements with the world, by virtue of the very nature of this relation, may remain somewhat 'mysterious.'⁵⁴

Or, as the linguistic philosopher J.L. Austin once quipped: "Well, it is complicated a bit; but life and truth and things do tend to be complicated. It's not things, it's philosophers that are simple."⁵⁵

52 E.D. Hirsch, "Objective Interpretation," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1696.

53 We apply this notion of "partial truth" to all forms of determinism, such as Freud's psychic determinism, Skinner's behaviorism, Hobbes' desire, and Marx's economic determinism, as well as the strong versions of Whorf's linguistic determinism and Wilson's biological determinism. Indeed, the very existence of these multiple systems suggests that any one cannot center the organic nature of human existence in any one.

54 Mitscherling, *Aesthetic Genesis*, 38.

55 J.L. Austin, "Performative Utterances," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1442.

What the Author Finds (Creates)

The author is a subject who, at least in part, uses her subjectivity to create a set of meanings, and instantiates these meanings in her text. But are these meanings actually 'in' the text? Is each reading of the text similar, as if based on some design 'in' the text, or is each reading wholly different and disconnected? To answer these questions, we need to examine what happens when an author reads her own text.

When the author reads her own narrative, she finds—at least to some degree—the characters, plot, genre, and meanings that she desired to create in the first place. She may find more than this, as an author writes out of many desires and intentions, some of which are preconscious in nature.⁵⁶ Indeed, if she reads at a different time, new meanings may emerge—a situation we will examine later. But the fact that she discovers some of her meanings suggests that she has succeeded in instantiating a purposeful design in the text. If this were not the case, then she would fail to recognize any of her planned meanings, and each reading would be radically disconnected from each prior reading.

This realization shows that the author's design is in the text, at least for the cultural context to which she writes. The author built this design into her text, through a direction-oriented creation that placed the events in a temporal order, utilized causal connections between events, placed relative valuations on the actions, and the like. The text may be marks on a page, but for the author it also has a purposive design as a kind of metastructure, which organizes, to one degree or another, the various words and sentences. Just consider how biblical scholars have recognized and characterized the general designs of the parable, miracle story, commissioning story, and benediction.

This recognition causes us to ask a more basic question: 'How does the author read her own text?' There is a tendency to assume that the author reads her own text naturally, in her own language. This picture is overly simplistic.

56 Searle allows for the existence of preconscious intentional acts, which are mental acts of which the author is unaware, but may identify upon reflection. But he doesn't allow for unconscious intentional acts, in the Freudian sense of being inaccessible, i.e., "deep unconscious mental intentional phenomena that are...in principle inaccessible to consciousness," (John Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* [Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992], 173).

The author actually begins by deciding which language she is going to use, even if she is only implicitly aware of this decision.⁵⁷

This notion of 'language decision' is most easily seen when engaging in translation. The translator begins by deciding which temporal and regional manifestation (dialect) of language to use. For example, a translator of the New Testament does not simply translate from 'the Greek,' but must at the very least decide between the grammars and semantics of Classical Greek, *Koinē* Greek, and Modern Greek. She must further decide upon the influence of the socio-economic and political context, such as whether the speaker is an enfranchised Roman commander at the Jerusalem garrison, or a disgruntled Palestinian peasant living in the countryside. For the careful translator, these choices are conscious and deliberate.

Similarly, when an author reads a text that she wrote in the past, she must decide whether to utilize her present language conventions, or those from when she wrote. After all, language has not stood still over those, say, 50 years, and language conventions may have undergone considerable change. Consider an author who wrote: "A poet could not but be gay . . ." in 1910, but is reading in the 1960s.⁵⁸ She might well state that 'gay' was used to mean 'happy' when she wrote, so that her meaning is that poets are happy, and not that they are homosexual. In doing so, she is choosing which historical dialect to use in her reading, whether she realizes this or not. Language usage is always a choice, albeit an implicit one.

Further, the author who wrote "A poet could not but be gay" in 1910, cannot go back and claim that she meant 'homosexual.' While it is possible to 'mean' something psychologically of which one is unaware (preconscious effects), this is not the case for semantic shifts. The connection between signifier and signified is *by definition arbitrary*, so that predictions of semantic shifts are, by definition, unreliable. While historical connections between the earlier and later uses can be identified, and even classified by linguistic mechanism, such shifts

57 Here the author is acting as a member of her intended audience. She is reading as the kind of audience to which she was writing, so that she reads with that audience's language and culture.

58 Here I am adapting Eco's example of Wordsworth's poem ("A poet could not but be gay . . ."), so that the author can also be the reader. Eco engages the historical situation, and concludes that the reader "has the duty to take into account the state of the lexical system at the time of Wordsworth. At that time 'gay' had no sexual connotation, and to acknowledge this point means to interact with a cultural and social treasury" (Umberto Eco, "Between Author and Text," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 68).

could have occurred in any number of directions.⁵⁹ It would be easy to posit hundreds of future meanings for the word ‘gay,’ making it quite impossible to reliably predict which use for that word would emerge. Thus, for the author to declare that she meant something at the time of writing that she could not historically, psychologically, or culturally have meant, is to be insincere.⁶⁰

We opened this discussion with the notion that an author re-creates the same general meaning each time she reads her text. Now we can offer at least one reason: authors tend to read with the same language conventions that they used when they wrote the text. Let us return to our example of “A poet could not but be gay . . .” When the author says that she meant ‘happy’ and not ‘homosexual,’ she shows that she is reading with the public language conventions that she used at the time of writing. She ties the poem to those historical conventions, and those historical conventions can be validated intersubjectively by modern linguistic study. She can aptly refute any reader who says that she meant ‘homosexual’ in her text, for that use of ‘gay’ did not exist in 1910 and could not have been reliably predicted. This choice tends to stabilize the meaning of the text for the author. It suggests that, for the author, *the meaning of the text is not stabilized by her private experiences or by her own private language, but by the public language conventions to which she wrote and to which she indexes her work.*

Selecting a Public Language for Writing

If the author reads her text with the historical conventions of a public language, then we must explore the author’s use of public language. Every author participates in a variety of speech communities, and each of these communities speaks an ever-so-slightly different dialect of their public language. One only needs to compare a journal from the speech community of artists to one from mathematicians to appreciate the differences! Each speech community arises within a different social context and uses language in slightly different ways. Thus Bakhtin suggests that language, even at the level of words, is a manifestation of each group’s “verbal-ideological life . . . no matter how narrow the social circle in which they are spoken.”⁶¹

59 Cf. Silva, *Biblical Words & their Meaning*, 82–86.

60 More specifically, it breaks Searle’s essential, and sincerity rules for assertions, as illocutionary acts. Cf. John Searle, “The Structure of Illocutionary Acts,” in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (New York: Oxford, 2001), 146, 148.

61 Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” 288.

When an author begins to write, she applies the language conventions of a particular speech community, as if she were writing to that speech community. Rabinowitz calls this the “authorial audience,” and writes that an author:

... cannot begin to fill up a blank page without making assumptions about the readers’ beliefs, knowledge, and familiarity with conventions... they design their books rhetorically for some more or less specific hypothetical audience...⁶²

After the author selects her audience (the ‘intended audience,’ which is the actual audience that exists at some cultural moment), she implicitly represents this audience, along with their language conventions, to herself (the ‘authorial audience,’ which is the author’s representation of that audience to herself).⁶³ She then designs her text so that it is understandable to her authorial audience. In other words, she indexes her narrative to that community’s language conventions, as she understands them. These choices, of language selection and language design, are part of her intentional act of writing, in this case stemming from her desire to be understandable (see below).

This comes as no surprise to biblical readers, who routinely scour the text for clues to the intended audience.⁶⁴ For example, consider Mark 12:42: “A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins (*lepta*), which are worth a penny (*kodrantēs*).”⁶⁵ The biblical reader might well wonder why the text

62 Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 21. Similarly John Searle: “In such cases the speaker intends to produce a certain illocutionary effect in the hearer... and he intends to get the hearer to recognize this intention in virtue of the hearer’s knowledge of the rules that govern the utterance of the sentence” (John Searle, “Indirect Speech Acts,” in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], 176). As earlier, this goes to the author utilizing the mimesis (Ricoeur) of the intended audience.

63 We use “authorial audience” to identify that theoretical audience to which the author wrote, based on the author’s grasp of their language conventions (as in Rabinowitz, *Before Reading*, 21). While this is the private act of the author, its manifestation is in public language, and the reader can use the form of her public language to identify the cultural moment in which the actual audience (intended audience) lived (Chapter 8). As the authorial audience is a manifestation of the author’s grasp of that audience’s public language, it will also have traces of the author’s own culture as well as elements of the author’s subjective use of language. These tend to subvert the identification of the audience, so that the text is not a “pure” manifestation of a single audience.

64 Readers have no access to the author’s mind, which is where the ‘authorial audience’ exists, and so use the actual audience which they can study (intended audience).

65 All scripture quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, 1989.

brings up two coinages. It is as if the author (implied author_R) expected the audience to be unfamiliar with the term ‘copper coin,’ and so offers the Roman equivalent (*kodrantēs*). This suggests that the author, in Gundry’s words:

... uses a Latin loan word to make sure his Roman audience do not miss the seeming smallness of the gift... Mark uses many other Latinisms, and this loanword suits a Roman locale and audience particularly well.⁶⁶

This brings us to the critical realization that writing is not a single intentional act, but many that are bound together in a kind of network.⁶⁷ Earlier we discussed the intentional act of writing as dealing with ‘meaning’ and ‘event’: the author begins with the desire to say/do something. The author represents this something to herself, creates a purposeful structure which is designed to reproduce this something, and instantiates this design in the text. Now we are introducing a second intentional act, which deals with the author’s choice of language.⁶⁸

In this second act, the author begins with the desire *that the text be understandable by a particular public audience* (the intended audience). After all, authors engage in publishing in order to be understood by an audience, as opposed to writing a diary, which is designed for private understanding. In order to be understood, the author utilizes the conventions of some public language. When she reads her text, she does so as a mock-reader from that audience. Her desire to be understandable is met when she, as such a mock-reader, understands the language of the text. The about-ness of this act is the abstract notion of ‘being understandable,’ and the design is modeled on the language of that speech community. Let us explore this element in more detail.

66 Robert Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 729, 732. This does not impinge on the issue of the origin of the gospel, but only on its intended audience. As R.T. France: “The use of the Latin term is not necessarily due to a Roman origin for the gospel...” (*The Gospel of Mark* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 493).

67 John Searle states that intentions don’t occur alone, but “function within a Network of other intentionality and against a Background of capacities...” (“Literary Theory and Its Discontents,” *New Literary History* 25, no. 3 [Summer 1994]: 641; cf. John Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* [Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992], 177).

68 Jerrold Levinson makes a similar distinction, calling the former “semantic intentions” and the latter “categorical intentions.” Categorical intentions are “the maker’s framing and positioning of his product vis-à-vis his projected audience,” and include such basic elements as genre (“Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look,” in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992], 232).

In order for an author to design her text for a particular speech community, the author must begin with a mental representation of their language conventions, such as their uses of words and grammar, their forms of genre, and the like. She begins with these language conventions, using them as the ideal form upon which she bases her language choices (even if she ends up playing with those conventions). For example, the author has a sense for how the intended audience understands the genre of fairy tale. She knows that for 21st century Americans, it generally begins with 'Once upon a time . . .', has imaginary characters, and ends with a moral. This is the ideal form, or type, from her intended audience.⁶⁹ When she writes for this audience, as an implied authorA, she generally uses this model, and so locates her text in a particular set of literary conventions, as indexed to a specific cultural moment for a specific speech community.

However, this account is still overly simplistic. Authors do not recognize conventions as absolute strictures on usage, but as 'best ways' to convey certain types of meaning. For example, if an author wants to write a serious biography of George Washington's life, she would not likely begin with the phrase: 'Once upon a time . . .' The author knows that this phrase, in early 21st century American English, functions as a genre marker for the fairy tale, which suggests 'make believe.' This is not to say that the author could not creatively apply the convention (she might begin with that mythical story about Washington cutting down a cherry tree), and at times do so quite effectively. But it is to say that the author recognizes how genre is used by her audience, so that her readers are less likely to take some markers as suggesting serious biography.

In short, authors realize that language forms are so tied to particular expectations, that the use of the form automatically invokes the expectation. This means that an author's choice of literary convention is also the choice for a traditional way of writing. Again let us use the example of genre. Genre functions as a structuring principle for a text, which is tied to existing cultural expectations (formal, ideological, and social).⁷⁰ When the author uses these genre

69 In literary theory, the ideal form is called a type, while its imitation in writing is called a token. But types *do not specify all of the meaning of the token*: the genre of 'fairy tale' suggests a moral, but doesn't suggest the moral itself (its content). In this way the types are similar to Aristotle's 'formal cause,' while the meaning is similar to his 'final cause.' The two become integrated in the text, but serve different functions. While the author's subjectivity can manifest itself in either 'cause,' it most commonly occurs in the final cause: the author utilizes common cultural forms (formal cause) to her subjective ends (final cause).

70 On the social and ideological expectations, as outlined by Bakhtin, cf. Vines, *The Problem of Markan Genre*, 55–56.

markers, she also lays claim to those expectations. When the author begins her text with: 'Once upon a time,' she knows that the reader will immediately expect imaginary events and a moral.

This is to suggest that genre is little more than a shortcut to a culturally defined set of language conventions, so that writing and reading occur in predictable ways within any speech community. As Pyrhönen summarizes: "First, genre helps us describe texts . . . directs the ways in which we write, read, and interpret texts . . . prescribes artistic practices . . . helps us to evaluate literary works."⁷¹ While considerable variability occurs within a genre, and creative authors are forever playing at the boundaries, at least some of the conventions must be followed in order for the text to be recognized, for example, as a serious biography and not a fairy tale. The author needs to provide "clues . . . in order to make his writing interpretable for the reader."⁷² An author can certainly use a hybrid genre, where the clues to distinguish between genres are missing, but such risks creating confusion.⁷³

This means that the author's selection of a genre is an intentional act, for this selection suggests an about-ness (the content of the convention) that is attached to a design (the structure of the convention). The author makes this selection—at least implicitly—because she recognizes that the 'something she is trying to say and do' is mirrored in the cultural expectations generated by that convention. When the reader recognizes that genre, he then possesses a basic set of 'reading instructions.' The early writings of Fish put it nicely:

It follows then that what utterers do is give hearers and readers the opportunity to make meanings (and texts) by inviting them to put into execution a set of strategies. It is presumed that the invitation will be

71 Heta Pyrhönen, "Genre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109.

72 Kalle Puolakka, "Here's a Nice Knockdown Argument for You: Donald Davidson and Modest Intentionalism," *Postgraduate Journal of Aesthetics* 3, no. 1 (April 2006), 21. Puolakka is summarizing Davidson, along with his rejection of language conventions, while still making room for intention: "The author cannot ignore how the reader is prepared to interpret his utterances because the intention to mean something must be formed through the possibility that it can be interpreted in the intended way" (*Ibid.*).

73 Cf. Kai Mikkonen: "In some exceptional cases, the categories of various types of nonfiction can be so well simulated in fiction that the reader may, mistakenly, think them not to be fiction. A much discussed example of this is Wolfgang Hildesheimer's novel *Marbot* (1981), which acts like a well-documented biography" ("Can Fiction Become Fact? The Fiction-to-Fact Transition in Recent Theories of Fiction," *Style* 40, no. 4 [Winter 2006]: 299–300).

recognized, and that presumption rests on a projection on the part of a speaker or author of the moves he would make if confronted by the sounds or marks he is uttering or setting down.⁷⁴

This discussion suggests two central conclusions. First, the author, as an implied authorA, utilizes language conventions based on her understanding of the intended audience. She does not begin with some 'universal' or 'non-enculturated' view of language, nor does she utilize some private language with a private meaning. She both writes and reads from her own grasp of the intended audience. As she expects the intended audience to be the group reading her text, she designs her language for them. Thus, her use of language reflects the conventions of that speech community, and the conditions of satisfaction are reached when she—as a mock reader for that community—uses their language to recreate her about-ness. It is this stabilization of conventions that causes her to recreate the same general meanings each time she reads her own text.

Let us apply this to a concrete example. The author of the *Gospel of Mark* wrote with a particular audience in mind, and indexed his language to that community. By examining his language choices, we may learn something about his intended audience. For example, in this narrative the author includes many first-century Jewish traditions, but then turns around and explains them. In Mark 15:42 he mentions the "Day of Preparation," and then notes that this is "the day before the Sabbath." Any first-century Jewish person would have known this, suggesting that this note was designed as an explanation for a non-Jewish person. When this is coordinated with other examples (e.g., Mk 7:2–4, with the explanations about washing and purification), it becomes clear that this author was writing for an audience which included Gentiles. He represented this audience's language and social institutions to himself, and then *designed his Jewish narrative to be understandable by that Gentile audience*. These choices are part of the language design of the text.

This brings us to the second conclusion: writing is not a single intentional act, but occurs at the intersection of many intentional acts that form a network. The author begins with a variety of desires, and among them are *the desire to say something* and *the desire to be understandable by a particular*

74 Stanley Fish, "Interpreting the Variorum," in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 183. While Fish goes on to suggest that the text is ephemeral, constructed by the reader (on which point he is correct), he fails to note that language is publically accessible, so that the reader can recognize and use these conventions (if he so wishes).

group. Because of the former, the author creates a structure that is designed to reproduce this ‘something.’ Because of the latter, the author selects a particular speech community, with its cultural reference world and literary forms.

Writing occurs, then, through the use of many intentional acts. Each act instantiates a design in the text, resulting in a near-baffling array of intentional structures. When the author reads her own text, she navigates these in a relatively unproblematic fashion. In her mind, the intended audience will also follow the design of the text in an unproblematic fashion. In short, *the author expects that her meaning will be re-created by the intended audience through their use of the same public language conventions and social institutions that she used*. In this way, the author designs her text to be understandable by that audience, in order to facilitate genuine communication (on which see Chapter 6).

Conclusion

This chapter opened with a story about an earth observer watching a Martian play a game with chess pieces. In the story, each person had a different interpretation of the Martian’s act of moving the bishop horizontally. We can now refine our understanding of this situation. The Martian begins with a network of desires: the desire to win the game, to move the pieces according to the rules, and the like. These desires structure the acts that follow, so that the Martian moves her bishop in a purposeful way. Where her desire is to follow the rules, she implicitly ties her acts to the rules that she learned from her culture. Where her desire is to win the game, she subjectively moves her pieces as part of a strategy. Thus her game is located by the rules from within her culture, even as she is unfolding her game with an ever-unique set of strategic moves. In this way she maintains her dual status as ‘a member of culture who acts’ and ‘a subject who acts.’ For the Martian, her acts—as she examines them—fit into her intentional design, so that they ‘mean’ the same thing every time she examines them: her historical moves were designed to be lawful and strategic.

In a similar way, the author begins with a network of desires, so that her act of writing is always ‘about’ something(s). She then designs her writing in a purposeful way, in order to reproduce that something—though this ‘something’ may change across the time of writing. Two such desires are to be understandable and to say/do something. Where the desire is to be understandable, the author (implied authorA) utilizes the language design of the intended audience. Generally speaking, this tends to be a reproduction of the intended audience’s culture in the text: their words, grammatical structures, literary forms, symbolic universe, and social institutions. Now, the author can use her

subjectivity in producing new words, structures, forms, and institutions, and biblical examples certainly occur. For example, the gospels present Jesus as performing a new kind of exorcism. As Meier writes:

In the strict cases of demonic possession in the Synoptics . . . Jesus—contrary to common practice in the ancient world—does not actually pray to God, lay on hands, or use elaborate incantations, spells, or religious objects.⁷⁵

But where the desire is to be understandable, these will generally be limited or domesticated.

On the other hand, where the desire is to say/do something—and especially something new—the author arranges these elements in her own unique way. Generally speaking, this tends to be a mixture of cultural and subjective elements. The author locates her text in culture, even as she is unfolding her subjectivity in her text. Again, biblical examples are relatively easy to find. Here we might consider Paul's new symbolic universe, where all social distinctions between people are erased: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).⁷⁶

This discussion suggests our central notion about writing, namely that writing is a kind of reproduction, where the author reproduces her culture and her subjectivity in the text. Interpretive systems that view the text only as a reproduction of culture, as tends to be the case in anthropological, sociological, and historical methods, generally miss the subjective components and so obscure the creative elements of the author's voice. Systems that view the text only as the creation of the readers—their worldview, their language, and their synthesis—fail to use the culture to which the author indexed her text, and so obscure the author's voice. These notions form the background for the

75 John Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 406. We will discuss this example in depth in Chapter 7.

76 For the social distinctions, cf. F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 187–190. While this symbolic universe was not wholly unique to Paul/early Christianity (cf. examples in M. Eugene Boring, Klaus Berger, and Colpe Carsten, ed., *Hellenistic Commentary to the New Testament* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1995], 467–468), it was decidedly uncommon, and social classes were clearly distinguished (cf. Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 52–56).

questions we asked in the opening chapter, about how readers silence the author's voice.

However, these issues are only a problem if the author actually is a subject and is capable of producing genuine newness. As Booth notes: "If there is no author, how can you talk about an ethical relation with anything?"⁷⁷ While we addressed the former concern (author as a subject) in this chapter, we will turn to the latter (a subject that can create newness) in the next. After addressing this, we can turn to the question of how the reader 'should' treat that newness, and the ethical issues involving her voice.

77 Wayne Booth, "Why Ethical Criticism Can Never Be Simple," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, ed. Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 22. Booth is specifically addressing the 'death of the author' movement.

Subjectivity, Texts, and Creation

The author, as a subject, writes her text. As a subject, she is not reducible to the ‘sameness’ of any culture or language. This is to suggest that language is not a leveling force, imprinting identical humans from its cookie-cutter mold of ‘sameness.’ Rather, subjectivity represents an irreducible component of the human, resulting in the capacity to produce newness. As Levinas has been summarized: “The Other cannot be captured or grasped and is therefore, in the strictest sense of the word, incomprehensible.”¹ This not only makes the human subject unique, but allows her to act uniquely. To address these issues, we turn to a further exploration of how humans assimilate language.

On the Assimilation of Language . . . Again

In the prior chapter, we examined how the prelinguistic child begins with sensations and experiences. These sensations generate characteristic behaviors, such as the facial grimace of pain, to which adults respond with the word “ouch.” Let us consider another situation, where an adult tosses a round plastic toy to a prelinguistic child, all the while saying: “Ball . . . ball.” The child has an experience of this object: she feels the texture, sees the color/shape, and watches the progress of the ball. This results in an engagement that *is prior to language, and upon which language will be metaphorically grafted*. In the child’s ‘one-word stage’ of language development, she will attach the sound ‘ball’ to these collective experiences (the associative complex).² In this way, the word functions as a metaphor for the child’s sensations and experiences of the world.

However, the experiences of the world are not identical for each child. For example, imagine that the same ball is tossed to three children. The ball hits

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- 1 Adriaan Peperzak, *To The Other* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1993), 21. He adds: “This resistance to all integration is not founded on the other’s will; before any possibility of choice and before all psychological considerations, the mere fact of another’s existence is a ‘surplus’ that cannot be reduced to becoming a part or moment of the Same” (Ibid.).
 - 2 Kirsten Malmkjær defines “associative complex” as “the range of reference of a child’s word” (“Language acquisition,” in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær [London: Routledge, 1991], 244).

one child in the face, is caught by the second child, and lands on a tack and deflates for the third child. The adult, for each child, says: “Ball . . . ball.” But the adult’s notion of ‘ball’ is an abstract one: it is any object that is round in three dimensions, including the side that cannot be seen. It is an abstraction of the common features of the adult’s many experiences, and so fails to individuate ‘ball’ for any particular experience.

Such is not the case for the child in the one-word stage. Here ‘ball’ is tied to particular experiences. When this child says “ball,” she is not making an abstract statement of reference, but addressing an engagement with the world. For example, when the child points to a beach ball, opens and shuts her hand, and says: “Ball . . . ball,” she is not simply referring to an object, but making a request (called holophrasis).³ Or when the child points to a ball, starts to cry, and shrieks: “Ball . . . ball,” she is showing her fear of that object and a desire for avoidance.

In our example of the three children, each experiences ‘ball’ differently, and each child’s use will reflect this difference. For the first child, ‘ball’ includes the emotions of surprise and fear; for the second child, it includes a soft thing for holding; and for the third child, it is grasped as something that gets smaller. These experiences form the base to which ‘ball’ is metaphorically applied, and will bleed into each child’s use of that word. Across time, the many experiences will allow the child to abstract ‘ball’ to a circular, brightly-colored, soft toy for catching, and later yet to an object that is round in three dimensions. But to the degree that early experiences are attached to ‘ball’ in the child’s memory, there remains *a residue of experience in every person’s use of that word*. This is similar to Chalmers’ hard problem of consciousness: “The hard problem of consciousness is the problem of experience. When we think and perceive, there is a whirl of information-processing, but there is also a subjective aspect.”⁴

Our point is that the mapping of subjective experience onto individual words results in a surplus of meaning—subjective meaning—for the child. This surplus involves ‘additions’ from private experiences, which others neither have in their experiences, nor hear in the speaker’s language. This means that an author never begins with the same language as any audience. Public language is not wholly uniform. It may be described as an abstraction of general characteristics for the community’s usage, with sufficient specificity for

3 On the one-word stage and holophrasis, see W.W. Meissner, “The Role of Language in the Development of the Self I: Language Acquisition,” *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 25, no. 1 (2008): 41, accessed May 18, 2014, doi: 10.1037/0736-9735.25.1.26.

4 David Chalmers, “The Hard Problem of Consciousness,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, ed. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 226.

coordination among its members. The community may even prescribe usage for its members, in the form of dictionaries and grammars. But the subjective elements are not necessarily shared, and to this degree an otherness pervades all language.

This is similar to the Quine's discussion on the 'indeterminacy of translation,' where he examines how a translator determines the use of a word from another culture.⁵ Quine begins with a native speaker pointing to a rabbit and saying: "Gavagai." The foreign word 'gavagai' may be translated by the English word 'rabbit' in ways that generate similar behaviors, and even coordinate activities for both native speaker and translator. But each also has an ever-so-slightly different understanding of the word. The translator may think of gavagai as referring to a whole rabbit, but, as Quine notes, the native speaker may apply it to a temporal stage in the rabbit's development or an undetached rabbit part. Words are neither connected to an extra-temporal reality that everyone recognizes (Platonism), nor do they contain an inner fund of meaning that imposes itself on every user (Quine). To some degree, word usage is private or, in our application, subjective.

This is also the reasoning behind Nagel's *What Is It Like To Be A Bat*.⁶ Both the human and the bat have access to the same physical world. It is highly likely that—if a bat could talk with a human—both could find a common word for 'bug.' Indeed, a sign language has been taught by human researchers to several of the great apes. But applying the word 'bug' to a flying insect does not mean that we understand 'bug-ness' as the bat does. As Nagel writes: "Thus it is a condition of referring to a common reality that their more particular viewpoints are not part of the common reality that they both apprehend."⁷ We can describe an object in the world, but that description ignores what Nagel calls the "species-specific viewpoint" which is "the essence of the inner world, and not merely a point of view on it."⁸ The inner world of the bat may be revealed in the bat's behavior—for example, that a 'bug' is characterized as 'food.'

5 Willard Quine, "Ontological Relativity," *The Journal of Philosophy* 65, no. 7 (April 1968), 185–212. Wright notes that Quine's indeterminacy of translation has a weak and a strong version. The weak version is our position, which contends "that some questions about the meaning of an expression are indeterminate" (Crispin Wright, "The Indeterminacy of Translation," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright [Malden: Blackwell, 1997], 400).

6 Thomas Nagel, "What Is It Like to Be a Bat?" *The Philosophical Review* 83, no. 4 (October 1974), 435–450.

7 *Ibid.*, 445.

8 *Ibid.*

But certain associations that characterize the bat's notion of 'bug' remain forever private.

While it sounds like we are arguing for a private language, this is not our point.⁹ Rather, we are attempting to develop the connections that tie 'experience' to 'language' in such a way as to account for both the subjective and common elements in public language. To this point we've emphasized the subjective elements. Our conclusion, for these subjective elements, is that *from the very beginning of language acquisition*, language is not a leveling field that impresses 'sameness' on each individual in a culture. A subjective residue, tied to the child's engagement with the world as located in memory, is also present. As language is initially located by these experiences, each person uses language in slightly different ways. So Craig concludes: "... it begins to seem quite possible that there are no conclusive reasons for banning EPI (epistemically private items) from the factors that can give expressions of the public language their meaning."¹⁰ Any individual's use of language necessarily includes elements that are private and subjective, however minor these may be.

But the child's experiences are also tied to communal elements. Each person that the child encounters calls the round thing 'ball.' These communal sounds also become part of the child's experience of the round thing. Indeed, it is only by the routine association of these 'sound experiences' to the 'brightly colored round object,' that the child comes to call an object 'ball' in the first place.¹¹ We even learn words about private sensations, say of 'pain' or 'joy,' by the repetitive attachment of words to stereotypical behaviors and facial expressions. Cook makes the point humorously:

Could it be that the child who comes crying with a bumped head and who screams when it is touched is giving his peculiar expression to an itching scalp? Or that the giggling child who comes wriggling back for more tickling is really a grotesque creature coming back for more pain?¹²

9 Wittgenstein's use of this term 'private language,' which is a language with no intersubjective criteria; see Chapter 5.

10 Edward Craig, "Meaning and Privacy," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright (Malden: Blackwell, 1997), 135–136; parenthesis mine.

11 Cf. E.L. Bavin, "Language Acquisition in Crosslinguistic Perspective," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995), 373–396.

12 John Cook, "Wittgenstein on Privacy," in *The Philosophy of Language*, ed. A.P. Martinich (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 528–529.

But the common elements of language lie deeper yet, as suggested by the work on 'language universals,' 'language of thought,' and 'the language faculty.'¹³ These suggest that the human brain is structurally wired with pre-language categories and syntax. But if human language is pre-structured by these categories, then the underlying structure of language is common and, to this degree, can never be private. By definition, there can be no such thing as a wholly private language: there are always shared components, and this means that there is no fully radical translation situation (this is Quine's translator).¹⁴ To this we can add Wittgenstein's reasons for rejecting private languages: there would be no intersubjective or intrasubjective criteria for word usage, so that communication could not occur in the first place (see Chapter 5).

But while a *wholly private language* cannot exist, *private elements*—as tied to sensations, emotions, and experiences—can. The word 'beetle' is part of the public language system, but the shudder or delight that a particular person consistently attaches to that word, is not. These private elements are attached as associations, implications, connotations, and the like. These additions do not make communication impossible, as if these private elements were the whole of language. The general abstractions of 'beetle' are public and common,

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- 13 Notes on all three: On "language universals": Kirsten Malmkjær writes: "The surface structure of any language is explained with reference to certain highly abstract features which are shared by all languages because they are innate in humans" ("Language universals," in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær [London: Routledge, 1991], 278). He goes on: "The firmest evidence for a universal which this tradition is interested in establishing is that syntactic analysis has revealed that a principle underlies an aspect of grammar, and that this principle is not one which a child could discover from any data available to it. Such a principle must be innate: it must be part of the Universal Grammar." (Ibid., 279). For an evaluation of universals, see Bavin, "Language Acquisition," 374–376. On "language of thought" (Fodor): cf. Fred Adams: "A very good reason to think that LOT (language of thought) is not a public, natural language is that we need the resources of a language in order to learn a first natural language, viz. hypothesis formation about what words and phrases mean and confirmation procedures to test those hypotheses..." ("Thoughts and Their Contents," in *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Stephen Stich and Ted Warfield [Malden: Blackwell, 2003], 144–145). On the "language faculty": Noam Chomsky writes: "Currently, the best theory is that the initial state of the language faculty incorporates certain general principles of language structure, including phonetic and semantic principles..." (*New Horizons in the Study of language and Mind* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], 60; cf. 3–5).
- 14 Quine writes that this translator only has a mechanism for "pointing" to the object and "assent" ("Ontological Relativity," 189). But even here, there are common assumptions about what constitutes "assent" and the meaning of "pointing," as discussed in Wright, "The Indeterminacy of Translation," 398.

and can be verified by behavioral means (as in *gavagai*). But the associated connotations may well remain private. The writer can only approximate these private elements by adding further explanatory comments.

Let us stop to summarize our discussion. Language is neither wholly private nor wholly common, but contains elements of both. For the young child, at least initially, the word 'ball' applies to her subjective experience of that object. The attachment of the word to this experience does not magically obliterate these associations, as if a single 'pure' meaning suddenly occurred, or as if the word 'ball' had an internal content that imposed its meaning on every user. This means that any person's use of language (*parole*) always has subjective elements, so that the mapping of any actual use of language is always incomplete. It is initially here that an author's subjectivity bleeds through into her writing.

The Author and the Generative Capacity of Language

From this base, we can extend our analysis to examine how the author is capable of generating entire structures of 'new-ness,' as a manifestation of her subjectivity. This is the place where the author moves beyond her inner representations of things that exist, to the creation of altogether new elements. After all, if the author's subjectivity is not capable of creating 'the new,' then subjectivity is a fairly hollow notion, without any significant effects in the world.

There can be no doubt that authors have created new objects in language. Examples are easy to identify: producing a paradigm shift, creating a new metaphor, writing with defamiliarization, and engaging in lateral thinking—to name just a few. Davidson's central example is a malapropism, which he calls "sheer invention."¹⁵ Yet even where there are no new elements, the arrangement, connections, and selective emphases of traditional elements can be ever unique, resulting in new themes and meanings. We might classify these as a 'generative use' of language. Let us examine this with the example of a new paradigm (disciplinary matrix, conceptual field), as outlined by Kuhn. Here our focus is on how something new is brought into language and communicated to another scientist, *prior to that culture having the language categories to express that newness*.

Kuhn developed his theories in the context of two opposing notions: existing paradigms determine what a person 'sees,' but existing paradigms are not

15 David Davidson, "James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty," in *Truth, Language, and History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 143.

wholly controlling of what a person 'sees.' On the one hand, Kuhn suggests that observation is so theory laden, that humans only see what existing paradigms permit. As Grandy summarizes: "(Kuhn) wanted to claim that before the medieval paradigm change that introduced the concept of the pendulum, there were no pendulums but only swinging stones."¹⁶ But on the other hand, Kuhn suggested that the scientist's view is not wholly bound to or controlled by existing paradigms, so that they are able to recognize anomalies from the expected.

It is this recognition of anomalies that is of interest here, for it suggests that language and culture do not fully determine the scientist's view of the world. Anomaly recognition requires seeing the world as different from the expectations of theory, language, and culture. So Kuhn writes that novelty:

... emerges only for the man who, knowing with precision what he should expect, is able to recognize that something has gone wrong. Anomaly appears only against the background provided by the paradigm.¹⁷

From this recognition, the scientist begins casting about for some explanation. She engages in thinking that goes against the grain of existing theory, beginning with the rejection of existing language categories. As Kuhn writes: "He will, in the first place, often seem a man searching at random, trying experiments just to see what will happen, looking for an effect whose nature he cannot quite guess."¹⁸ From these the scientist generates a speculative theory, which is "a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field's most elementary theoretical generalizations..."¹⁹ This culminates in the production of a new way of thinking that is not reducible to existing cultural ways of thinking.

We might recognize this same kind of process at work in the originators of new interpretive systems, such as the originators of feminist interpretation. Early feminists recognized that something was problematic in the normal methods of reading. In a supremely creative step, they recognized that patriarchal structures are so deeply ingrained that they appeared 'natural' and 'inevitable.' Initially, they desired to escape this cultural hegemony, without knowing where to step next, but casting about for a new way to read texts.

16 Richard Grandy, "Thomas Kuhn," in *A Companion to Analytic Philosophy*, ed. A.P. Martinich and D. Sosa (Malden: Blackwell, 2001), 375.

17 Thomas Kuhn, *The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed., in *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, vol. 2, no. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 65.

18 Ibid., 87.

19 Ibid., 85.

From this desire was eventually born the techniques of 'resistant readings' and 'readings of retrieval.' The originators of feminist criticism used their subjectivity in the creation of newness at the level of method.

However, in order for communication about this newness to occur, the scientist (as well as the feminist) still needed to encode these new ways of thinking in language. She might begin with conventional language and its categories, only to find such inadequate to the task. As Einstein wrote: "It was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built."²⁰ She then alters the categories of language in ways not predictable from existing language categories—these are not mere extensions of existing categories. As Kuhn writes: "But paradigms differ in more than substance, for they are directed not only to the nature but also back upon the science that produced them."²¹ *She creates alterations in the categories of language, even as she uses language to communicate those altered categories.* The two languages may be incommensurate, in that they operate out of incompatible categorizations of the world, and yet they must still use the same language in order for the scientist to communicate her research to anyone else.

In other words, the scientist (and feminist) must not only posit a new explanation of the world, but also create new language categories for the communication of that explanation. In doing so, the scientist is acting like a subject over language, using it as a tool by manipulating and shaping it towards her own ends. She even tries to convince her fellow scientists that these new categories constitute a better explanation of the world. This requires an emphasis on the generative capacity of humans to shape language, and a de-emphasis on the shaping capacity of language over humans—a dialectical process where both are involved, but one assumes relative priority.

Jung makes a similar argument about the creation of art, from the standpoint of human psychology. He notes that art occurs in a variety of types, despite the fact that all artists have the same pre-existing psychological conditions. As he puts it, all humans have "a father- or a mother-complex, all know about sex and therefore have certain common and typical human difficulties."²² But art cannot be reduced to these leveling conditions, or all art would be identical. So Jung poses that humans are capable of a "creative reorganization of those very conditions to which a causalistic psychology must always reduce

20 Cited in Kuhn, *Ibid.*, 83.

21 *Ibid.*, 103.

22 Carl Jung, "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 991.

it.”²³ His point is that the shaping capacity of, say, the Oedipus complex, is only part of the story. The other part is generative, *where newness emerges out of the commonness of the human psychological condition*.

But how did these scientists, psychologists, artists, and feminists break away from the shaping capacity of language, in order to use language in a generative way? After all, they began with the same language and categories, so that one would expect their texts to be a reproduction of these elements in a kind of linguistic and literary conservatism. Yet despite this expectation, many authors escape this conservatism in the production of the new and the shocking. Steinbeck suggests the dialectical nature of this process where he writes: “A story must have some points of contact with the reader to make him feel at home in it. Only then can he accept wonders.”²⁴

While a number of mechanisms can account for the emergence of newness, let us foreground two, as these are applicable to the writing process as well as the reading process. After all, readers must also be able to recognize and understand this newness. The first mechanism utilizes the concept of the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle is based on the realization that readers only understand the whole of a work after they have grasped the specific parts, but that the specific parts only have meaning after readers have grasped the whole. For example, readers cannot grasp the meaning of the *Gospel of Mark* until they have read all the parts of the story, and yet they cannot understand how these parts fit together—or even which elements are important—until they have a sense for the whole. The reader is caught in a circular process.

While it might appear that this circle is static, with readers simply repeating the same meaning each time, this is not the case. Initially readers do not know how the parts fit together, and so ramble about somewhat blindly in the construction of an initial ‘whole.’ But the second time they read the story, they start from a different beginning point. They already have some sense of the whole, and so foreground certain elements of the text with selective emphasis. They are reading the same words, but now with a slightly different stress and with a selection bias. Each successive reading will continue this process of shifting the beginning point, and this creates a direction, or a vector, within the reading process. Thus, each reading is neither a starting over (as if never read before), nor a random shift (as if each reading produced ‘the new’ in ways unconnected to prior readings). Rather, newness emerges out of the sameness of the text, because of the direction created by this circular and dynamic process.

23 Ibid., 994.

24 John Steinbeck, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (New York: Viking Press: 1961), 70.

So how does an author use the hermeneutic circle to create the new? This is a complicated process, and here we can only sketch a somewhat idealized schema. The author begins with a desire to write something, and then creates a design for reproducing that 'something' in the text. For a narrative, the design might be a series of events with temporal and causal connectors, which produces a variety of themes, as set in the design of a genre. These themes are not unified, but set into conflict with each other. The conflict itself is controlled—via selective emphases, foregrounding, evaluative suggestions, and intra-narrative resolution—to produce a particular outcome (the about-ness of this intentional act). The author imagines all of this, to one degree or another, from the beginning, forming something of an outline for the narrative. For this discussion, we will assume that the outcome is relatively conventional in nature: the author desires to reproduce some common cultural belief.

Next the author, as an implied authorA, begins to actually write, creating the concrete events of the story in a way that matches her mental image. As she constructs the early events, she does so with an eye to the 'something' that the text is about. But after the initial events are constructed, she is no longer at the beginning point from which she started or imagined the narrative. She is further down the road of constructed elements, and these might well suggest a variety of *similar though somewhat different ends*. In other words, the author started with the whole, and then moved to create the constituting elements. But the constituting elements—which only exist in part—now suggest several possible wholes. If the author chooses to follow any new 'whole,' she is on a trajectory, or a vector of movement, towards something new. With the construction of further events, the author spins along the hermeneutic circle and realizes yet other different, unforeseen, and unpredictable ends.

At this point the author will have to make some choices. She may ignore these new ends and stick to her original plan. In doing so, she will need to suppress the new ends in order to keep the design on the original meaning—and *this alone shows that the parts do suggest new 'wholes' to the author*. However, to the degree that the author follows any new end, she partially dis-embeds herself from the existing cultural structures that had guided her writing to that point. She is now in the realm of the new, the exotic, the different, and the other. She has acted out of her subjectivity towards an uncontrolled end, and in doing so has begun shaping language into something new—she is world-building.

This process is further complicated by the way in which the author reviews her yet unfinished text. When she reads her partial text in a more conventional way (linear, convergent, logical), she will project the remainder of her project in a particular way. But if she reads in a non-conventional way (associative,

divergent, lateral), she may project the remainder in a very different way, opening up further unexpected and unpredictable ends.²⁵ By engaging in the latter type of thinking, the author further opens the possibility of forming a non-conventional 'whole' for the work, and so bringing newness into her culture.

A second mechanism that can account for newness is supervenience. Supervenience is the notion that, when a group of objects are brought together, a new kind of object may emerge. This combination may have properties that are not found in the original objects, and these properties generally emerge in a reproducible way.²⁶ For example, placing the three letters 'c', 'a', and 'r' together causes the emergence of linguistic meaning, which is not something found in the letters themselves. While the word is composed of letters, it is not constrained by the properties of those letters, but is characterized by emergent properties. This process also applies to higher levels of language organization, such as the sentence. Here the collection of a noun and verb results in a different kind of object. As Ricoeur writes:

The sentence is not a larger or more complex word. It is a new entity. It may be decomposed into words, but the words are something other than short sentences. A sentence is a whole irreducible to the sum of its parts.²⁷

At a higher level of organization, a collection of sentences containing the elements of 'character' and 'plot' result in the emergence of an 'event,' with the emergent characteristics of temporal and/or causal properties.

Now let us apply this to the author's production of the new. The author begins with a desire to say/do something, and then starts to write words. But individual words do not contain the notion of character, plot, happenings, themes, or causality. Those are supervenient objects that have to be constructed, moving from words to sentences, from sentences to events, from events and evaluative statements to themes, and so on. As the author begins to concretize her text, this collection will be oriented towards creating her original intentional

25 On associative, divergent, and lateral modes, cf. Marilyn Higgins and Dory Reeves, "Creative thinking in planning: How do we climb outside the box?" in *The Town Planning Review* 77, no. 2 (2006): 221–244.

26 These are the three properties of supervenience: emergentism, non-reducibility, and property covariance. For our purposes, we are posing a form of global supervenience. On the terminology, we are following Jaegwon Kim, "Supervenience," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Samuel Guttenplan (Malden: Blackwell, 1994), 575–583.

27 Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 7.

objects (the about-ness she envisions for her text). But in the early stages this collection is incomplete, and an incomplete collection could support multiple supervenient objects. At this early stage, the author may recognize some of those alternate objects. Or, as the author continues, she may introduce an alternate element into the collection, and no matter how small this alteration, create the possibility of a non-planned, supervenient object.

When this divergence occurs, she will need to make a choice: she can suppress the new object by continuing with the original collection, or she can emphasize the new object by creating a different collection. But when she changes her collection at any level, all the higher level elements—which were based on the original set—must shift in a cascade like fashion. To the degree that the author allows new objects to emerge, she creates a vector of movement within the process of writing. This opens the possibility for moving beyond the conventional meanings found in culture.

These concepts can be used to explain the notion of defamiliarization in literature. Here a common object is presented in a unique way, so that readers ‘see’ the object in a new way. Shklovsky makes this point explicitly: “. . . its purpose is not to make us perceive meaning, but to create a special perception of the object—it creates a ‘vision’ of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it.”²⁸ The author utilizes a non-conventional set of compositing elements in order to create this ‘special perception.’ Given our discussion on supervenience, we can now say that defamiliarization is not a new vision of the old object, but the creation of an altogether new supervenient object that only bears a resemblance to the older one. Readers then relate the new object to the object that is ‘in the world,’ and consider it to be a new vision of the familiar.

Further, it is worth noting that the author who writes with defamiliarization does not even need a non-conventional set of elements. Simply placing a unique emphasis on a conventional set may cause new objects to emerge. In shifting the emphasis, she enhances the chance *for supervenience to occur within fully-conventional combinations*. This suggests that even a static language (if such ever existed) cannot be domesticated: newness will emerge via this specialized process.

However, we must also note that the newness created by these processes is limited. Subjective newness is still constrained by one’s existing language, for while ‘thought’ may include extra-linguistic elements,²⁹ the newness must—in the end—be producible in some kind of language (linguistic, emotional,

28 Victor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), 765, 768.

29 On the relation of thought to language, see discussion Chapter 2, footnote 32.

kinesthetic, etc.). While language has the resources for limited extensions beyond commonness, as occurs in a neologism or malapropism, these new bits still retain their position in the language system: a neologism still maintains a standard syntactical position and a malapropism a standard form.³⁰ Radical newness, in the sense of having no connections to conventional language's alphabet, syntax, and the like is really quite impossible.

These various processes open the space for an author to create newness, so that writing is not necessarily a reproduction of existing culture or surrounding texts. This conclusion can now be integrated into our earlier discussion about subjectivity: humans use language in a tool-like fashion in the development of new objects, via the specialized processes of the hermeneutic circle, divergent thinking, and supervenience. To the degree that the author uses these, she engages the generative capacity of language and functions as a subject in the production of the new.

Summary

We began this chapter with the suggestion that the author is a subject, which means that the author is not fully reducible to the sameness of language and culture. We can now summarize why that is. Subjectivity is developed in the child's experiences of the world. Language may be attached to these experiences, but 'words' do not overwrite those experiences, as if they had some inner content or ontological structure that imposed its use—and its use alone—on the child. Quite the other way around, the child maps her experiences onto the word, so that 'ball' has an excess of private meaning. In this way subjective experience enters language usage (*parole*).

This process, in modified form, continues into adulthood. The adult's experiences continue to shape language, even as language is shaping their experiences. This means that a certain element of 'otherness' and 'commonness' pervades all language usage. Further, the author can utilize specialized processes, such as the hermeneutic circle and supervenience, in creating structures of (limited) newness.

When the author (implied authorA) writes, she reproduces elements of 'culture' in the text. This reproduction generally includes the intended audience's use of words and grammatical forms, as well as its social institutions. When

30 Wittgenstein calls this "stage setting," and his example is a neologism (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Kenny [Malden: Blackwell, 1994] 147).

interpreters attempt to locate the biblical text's religious, political, racial, gender, and economic structures, they are looking for these reproductions, as found in the culture of the intended audience. Parables, miracle stories, benedictions and blessings all occur in standard and recognizable forms . . . or at least with sufficient clues for readers to recognize these as such (we will later examine cases where such clues are missing).

But the author also reproduces her subjectivity in the text. When readers recognize that the gospel authors are using words idiosyncratically (e.g., *euangelion*), that Jesus' exorcisms do not fit into the general form of 1st century culture, or that Pauline literature reshapes his culture's symbolic universe, they are examining manifestations of the author's subjectivity. Even when the author is using traditional source materials, she is applying her subjectivity in the selection, arrangement, and evaluation of those pericopes. In other words, the biblical authors were engaged in *the dialectical process of repackaging their cultures in the text, even as they were shaping a new world out of those cultural elements*. At this stage, the text is taking the shape of the author's unique voice in the world. It is this concrete manifestation of subjectivity—the very epiphany of selfhood—that goes out to the audience. This suggests that the biblical text, or any text, is not like other objects in the world. As opposed to a rock or tree, it functions as a manifestation of the author's subjectivity.

However, we have not yet determined what this means for the reader. When readers pick up a text, they are not in the same position as the author. They bear a different relationship to the text. The author knows how she wants the reader to read (as the authorial audience) and what she wants the reader to create (her intentional objects), but readers are not bound by these expectations. Readers need not follow them at all. Thus, we now turn to the readers, and how interpretation proceeds for them.

Reading as an Intentional Act

In the last two chapters, we examined the relation of the author to the text. We used the metaphor that the author is like a person playing chess, moving her pieces according to her design. However, that person's mental acts are not visible. The observer only sees the physical behavior of the actor. Readers of biblical literature are much like that observer, in that they only have the author's physical acts, that is, her words, and even these come through an intermediary (the implied authorA). Readers do not have the author, the implied authorA, the author's psychology, the author's intention, the author's voice, or the text's voice. None of these float, ghost-like, over the opening words of the text. The only feature that readers encounter is the marks on the page.

So how do readers engage those marks? We might begin by inquiring into the 'rules of reading.' However, there are no such rules, in the sense that no rules are either universal or enforceable. There are no requirements that one read from the position of any particular speech community, cultural ideology, or language usage. Nothing stops one from reading the text from right to left, from end to beginning, or from rearranging the words of the text. Indeed, nothing stops the reader from using the text as a football or a stepstool. There are no formal constraints (outside of what a professor requires of her students!). As one author summarizes, readers only have "dots on a page . . . (the text) has no will, no power, no being beyond what we can make of it . . . The dots are mute."¹

Thus, one may talk about 'the voice of the text' or how the text 'questions the reader,' but these constructs are a metaphor for a linguistic error. The only 'voice' that readers hear is their own borrowed voice, which they mistakenly attribute to the text and author. Readers create the text out of their own grasp of language. There is no 'other' in the text. Or is there? Is the text radically open for the reader? Is it devoid of internal content, designs, or structures? We begin our examination of these questions by turning to those 'dots on a page.'

Designs 'in' the Text

When readers pick up a Biblical text, whether in the original language or in translation, they encounter marks on a page. They recognize the marks as

¹ James Kincaid and James Phelan, "What Do We Owe Texts: Respect, Irreverence or Nothing at All," *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1999), 762; parenthesis mine.

letters, and so recognize that there is a design to those marks. They are not random shapes, but have the design of some alphabet. Readers recognize this ‘alphabetic design’ as being in the text, though they are not forced to follow it. In literary terms, readers recognize that the text calls for a particular kind of reader—an implied reader who utilizes just this alphabet—though they may choose to resist that invitation. Indeed, they may apply a different kind of design to the shapes, as some have done.² Consider how Moore plays with the shape of the Greek letter *chi*, serially viewing it as an anagram for the German *ich* (“which is German for the personal pronoun I”), as the opening letters of the Greek word *ichthys* (“Mark’s plot lines are fishing lines”), as a *hook* (“... Mark’s book becomes a hook, a clawed fishhook or x”), as a *deep gash* (“... the clawed *chi* has cut a deep gash in Mark as well as in Jesus”), as a *deletion* (“deletes though without erasing”), and as a play on *doubleness* (“Mark is a cross-disciplinary text”).³

The reader will not be thrown into jail for playing with the letters. But as such attempts are based on the original structure of the alphabet, this structure still juts through the transformed shapes as a trace. Indeed, the original structure is deliberately kept visible, so that readers will recognize these shapes as a play on the alphabet. Our point is that readers recognize the shapes as the design of an alphabet, as opposed to assuming that they are random snowflake shapes. Despite how they play with those shapes, they still recognize that design ‘in’ the text.

Readers also recognize that the letters are in groupings (words), and generally choose to respect these groupings. Indeed, this even occurs when the letters of the various words are run together without spaces (as in the *Koinē* Greek of the original New Testament). Again, there are no rules requiring readers to recognize these groupings, and some readers choose to play with this design by bracketing out various letters (e.g., de[construct]ion). But this is neither a very active reshaping of the convention (they do not take letters from different words) nor it is consistently applied (they do not do this with every word). In short, readers still recognize grouping designs ‘in’ the text. Indeed,

2 Peter Zima summarizes on Barthes’ application of Erté’s alphabet: “In an attempt to upgrade the variable, polymorphic, and polysemic graphic sign, Barthes sets out to demonstrate ... to what extent the letter as a graphic unit defies communication and conceptualization ... to him Erté’s alphabet appears as a subversive transformation of the communicative sign into an erotic image which gives us pleasure” (*The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory* [London: The Athlone Press, 1999], 134).

3 Stephen Moore, “Deconstructive Criticism,” in *Mark & Method*, ed. Janice Anderson and Stephen Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 95–97.

even when readers play with letter groupings, they usually create conventional words out of the larger word (de[construct]ion), instead of non-sense words (dec[onstr]uctio[n]).

In a similar way readers recognize that word groupings occur in the text, with the first word having a capital letter and the last word a period. They do not take words from one sentence and mix them in other sentences, as if no design existed. When they come to the sentence: "Bob ran to the store," they assume that 'Bob' is the one doing the running, and not some other character. They assume that 'store' is the object to which Bob is running, and not the verb ('to store something') for the next sentence. Readers generally choose to read these words in a sequence and order. Behind these choices is the implicit acknowledgment that these marks have the design of some language, and so are 'in' the text.

Again, we note that readers are not required to follow any of these designs, but may choose to reject the offered role of the implied reader. No one will be sued for using the book as a football. Now the author might consider such a misuse of a social convention, i.e., that 'books' are designed to be read, and she could easily point out that a book does not have a design that permits its use as a bicycle or a tractor. Indeed, the design of a book resists such usages! This internal design limits its use not only at the gross level of 'book vs. tractor,' but even at the uses for each type of book. For example, a mathematical text on calculus simply cannot be read under the genre of romance nor, as Levinson humorously notes, can a poem be mistaken for a grocery list.⁴ In biblical literature there may be confusion over select forms (what is genre of 'gospel'?), but most designs are relatively clear: a benediction cannot be taken as a pronouncement story, and a genealogy cannot function as an exorcism story.

Further, virtually everyone in a particular culture can agree on these assessments, suggesting that these evaluations are not wholly subjective or idiosyncratic. Members of a culture can come to intersubjective agreement that the marks are letters, that the collection of letters is a word, that a book is not a tractor, and that a math text is not a romance novel. This suggests an ontology of the text: the physical elements (paper, book spine, page numbers, words) and internal design (plot, characters, tone) *are restrictive at the level of usage*. While this particular set of elements can be used for a variety of things, which may vary from culture to culture, it cannot be used for just anything.

This recognition of design is based on conventions that readers have learned from their culture. Their culture taught them the shape of the letters, the way

4 Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 233.

in which groupings occur, and the manner of sequencing (reading from left to right, top to bottom). Other cultures teach different designs, but that does not mean that the original design is unrecognizable from other perspectives. For example, English-like letters are found in other language designs (e.g., the Greek and Spanish alphabet). When a group of readers sees only the first letter of the first word in a text, they may recognize the shape of 'k', and yet not know if this is a Greek, English, or Spanish letter. But if these readers have the entire first paragraph, all can come to an agreement that the language design is, say, English and not Greek. The text is not simply 'what the reader makes of it.' Designs, at various literary levels, exist in the text and can be validated intersubjectively. They are not simply "dots on a page" that are "mute" . . . even though readers are under no obligation to listen.

Now, when actual readers pick up a text, they do not initially see the entire first paragraph. They only see the opening letters, and from these they make an 'educated guess' about one or another language design. This choice is based on various cues from those opening marks, which readers match to various linguistic and literary designs in their cultural background.⁵ Here readers oscillate between cultural designs outside of the text (linguistic and literary conventions) and elements within the text (marks, spaces), in a creative matching process based on similarities. In doing so, they generally assume that the author—and so her text—is following some culture's linguistic and literary conventions. Only on this basis do readers form an initial guess about the text's language, genre, and the like.

Further, this guess is applied uniformly. Readers expect the whole text to follow their guess. They expect that the author, who begins with English letters and words, will stay with English letters and words, and not randomly insert Greek or Spanish letters.⁶ When readers recognize the genre clues for a parable or a miracle story, they expect the remainder of the narrative to conform to that model. Readers anticipate this, look for those elements, and will even create those elements when they are absent. *It is the reader's assumption of general uniformity, at the level of linguistic and literary conventions, which allows the reader to develop and act upon expectations generated by this initial guess.* But this is only the initial expectation, which may need to be changed, so that we need to further explore this 'initial guess.'

5 Umberto Eco calls this an "interpretive bet" ("Overinterpreting Texts," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 63).

6 Code switching might appear to be an exception (speakers who are fluent in two languages, who use a base [matrix] language with occasional phrases from the other [embedded] language). But even here, speakers generally utilize the syntax of the base language for the whole sentence.

The Initial Guess

When readers come to the first word in a text, they immediately make a guess as to the linguistic and literary form. This means that readers begin by accessing materials outside of the text itself. They turn to elements supplied by their culture. For example, when readers from 21st century American culture open a narrative and see the first word “Once . . .”, they recognize an English alphabet. They further recognize that the language design is English, that the letters are to be read from left to right, and that this is a text and not a tractor. These are supplied by each reader’s understanding of language, as located in various social institutions. However, this is all very general. Readers have no idea or guess about literary specifics, such as genre.

Indeed, readers even know, if only implicitly, *that the narrative won’t help them directly in this decision, for narratives generally do not announce or define the genre in which they are written*. No one opens a book of fairy tales only to find: “This is a fairy tale, in which none of the events or characters are real, but are imagined for the purpose of suggesting a moral sentiment.” Instead, readers begin with the opening words, and enter into a process of guessing at the genre, based on conventions they have learned.

So, in our example, let us assume that the opening phrase is: “Once upon a time . . .” For 21st century American readers, such a phrase functions as a genre marker for the fairy tale. From this phrase alone, readers have enough material to make an initial guess at the genre, and they impose the expectations generated by that cultural convention upon the remainder of the text. In doing so, the reader is beginning to construct a reading role, and so to act like the implied reader.

The notion of an ‘implied reader’ is that of “an imaginary person who is to be envisaged . . . as responding to the text at every point with whatever emotion, understanding, or knowledge that text ideally calls for.”⁷ It is usually viewed as a static textual construct, which is already whole and complete ‘in’ the text, and which functions as a role for the reader to follow.⁸ However, this fails to address how readers actually recognize that role.

Readers begin with textual cues and guesses, lined up along the temporal axis of reading. In our example, the reader recognizes the cue ‘Once upon a time’ as a genre marker for the fairy tale, and so invokes a reading plan—a restriction on the many ways of reading—based on this convention. In doing

7 Jack Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 38.

8 Cf. Peter Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, Society for New Testament Studies 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4; and Robert Fowler, *Let The Reader Understand* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 33.

so, he is creating a way of reading which is designed to meet the implicit expectations of the text, that is, he is attaching the cues to the literary conventions of the intended audience. Similarly, when the Gospel of Matthew opens an embedded story with the formula: "For the kingdom of heaven is like . . ." the reader recognizes the cue for a comparative figure of speech, such as an introductory formula for a parable.⁹ In choosing to follow this implicit expectation, he constructs and adopts the role of the implied reader: he reads the pericope under the form and expectations of the parable, and not those of the genealogy or benediction. However, this is only the reader's initial guess. He will have to read further to either validate or invalidate that interpretive guess.

After making the initial guess, readers expect the rest of the text to follow these linguistic and literary designs. But while the initial guess is imposed as a structuring principle, readers do not apply this structure rigidly, as if that guess could not be modified. Indeed, readers may come to recognize that certain textual elements seem to resist the initial guess. Their utilization of the initial guess generates expectations, and resistance occurs when these expectations are not met or where elements do not seem to fit. For example, readers may assign the initial guess of 'historical biography' to a text. But should this text introduce unicorns and one-eyed giants, they will come to recognize that this guess does not fit. This is not to say that historical biography cannot utilize one-eyed giants, but only that these do not meet the expectations of 21st century American readers.

So, what happens when readers impose a foreign structuring principle upon the text? For example, what happens when a reader applies the guess of 'miracle story' when reading the *Parable of the Vineyard*? Or what happens when the reader applies the symbolic universe of physical causation when reading an exorcism story?

Let us examine this with the example of the *Demon Possessed Boy* (Mk. 9:14–27). When a modern (post-Enlightenment) reader comes to such a story, he will likely be reading with the cultural belief that illness is the result of physical causes, as rooted in his symbolic universe and manifested in his social institutions. Thus, his initial guess is that the boy's convulsions are due to some physical cause. However, various elements of the story appear to resist this belief, as where the father, the narrator, and Jesus talk about the convulsions as caused

9 Mt. 20:1. On a parable's introductory formula, cf. Georg Strecker, *History of New Testament Literature*, trans. Calvin Katter (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1992), 144; and Bernard Scott, *Hear Then the Parable* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 16–17. Rabbinic parables used similar introductory formulas; cf. Harvey McArthur and Robert Johnston, *They Also Taught in Parables* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990), 99.

by “a spirit.” Our reader may still attempt to impose a physical theory of causation upon these elements, but further resisting elements just keep popping up: characters assign agency and purpose to that spirit (“... in order to kill him”), Jesus exorcises the spirit, and the disciples ask why they could not “cast the spirit out.”

These elements create resistance because the implied author^A and the reader are using different social institutions, and each institution projects a different set of expectations of what ‘should happen next’ in the story. The modern reader expects the application of a medicine which effects a physical cure, while the 1st century Jewish reader expects an exorcism which removes both the demon and its impurity. Only the modern reader’s social institutions cannot account for the story’s elements, as if the role assumed by this reader is no longer responding to the text’s elements. In short, he are no longer following the role of the implied reader, and this creates a series of disjunctions in reading.

When the initial guess creates a major disjunction between the reader’s expectation of certain elements and the elements created by the application of that guess, the reader recognizes the need to reevaluate. Critically, this means that *the reader’s guess is never so controlling that it manipulates all textual elements so as to suppress all textual designs*. If it were, then reading would only be a reproduction of the reader’s grasp of the world. No genuine learning could occur, as this requires an engagement with something that is ‘other’ with respect to the reader.¹⁰ Indeed, such readers could not even recognize ‘otherness’ or ‘newness’ (their world view would always reproduce itself in reading), and the notions of ‘disjunctions’ and ‘resistant readings’ would be nonsense. So Harker concludes:

However, the proposal that the reader supplies everything is not supported by empirically determined interactive formulations of the reading process that emphasize the joint contribution to meaning of both the text and the reader.¹¹

10 Cf. Jens Zimmerman’s summary of Levinas: “The world, says Levinas, comes to me through the other in a master-teacher relation... Thus knowledge can be arrived at not maieutically but in conversation with the other” (*Recovering Theological Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 212–213).

11 W. John Harker, “Towards a Defensible Psychology of Literary Interpretation,” in *Empirical Approaches to Literature and Aesthetics*, ed. Roger Kreuz and Mary MacNealy (Norwood: Ablex, 1996), 648. Also cf. Jeff Mitscherling, *Aesthetic Genesis* (Lanham: University Press of

Thus, while interpretation is never free of the reader's guess, or the interests and ideology behind that guess, interpretation is also not wholly controlled by it. The reader does not simply find what his interests, culture, and methods predispose him to create.

While our examples have involved readers and authors from different cultures, similar disjunctions occur when both are from the same culture. A culture's language is not wholly uniform, as each culture is composed of multiple speech communities. One only needs to compare a journal from the speech community of 'artists' to one of 'mathematicians' to appreciate the differences. Yet even in the most ideal communicative situation, where both are from the same speech community and the reader engages the text without resistance, the reader will still construct a design ever so slightly different from that of the author.¹² This is a direct consequence of the author being a subject, which means that her voice is not fully reducible to the language of any speech community, and the reader being the same. Language is not wholly uniform within any group or wholly leveling of that group. If language were, then subjectivity would be a myth, having the power of that idea but none of its substance.

Now readers are generally uncomfortable with such discordant elements. They begin reading with the expectation of coherence to some design, for example, at the level of letters, words, and sentences. When readers recognize the alphabet as English, they do not expect to see an occasional Spanish letter to be randomly tossed in.¹³ They also expect coherence at the higher level of paragraphs: readers do not treat each sentence as if it were disconnected to the prior sentence, and so assign a different plot, protagonist, and genre to each sentence. They continue this pattern of recognizing, assigning, and rendering coherence at even higher levels of complexity, resulting in the creation of themes. When readers construct a theme, they are finding coherence between some of the story-events, by abstracting each event to meaning-bits and creatively imagining how these bits 'fit together.' Indeed, readers construct themes in the post-modern novel, even though those themes are mutually contradictory. As Cavarero writes:

America, 2010), 115; and David Miall and Don Kuiken, "Foregrounding, Defamiliarization, and Affect—Response to Literary Stories," *Poetics* 22, no. 5 (1994): 389–407, esp. 404.

12 See *Excursus* to Chapter 6 for a listing of reasons.

13 While readers, at the level of words, may recognize polysemy, ambiguity, and heteroglossia, they expect these to be resolved at the level of the sentence, as based on their expectation of the author's synthetic activity in rendering coherence (e.g., supplying sufficient context so as to reduce the polysemy to a particular usage).

... the text that puts into words a biography of discontinuous and fragmentary characters (even in the most radical 'postmodern' sense) still ends up unable to flee from the unity, which, listening to the tale with the ear of its desire, is conferred upon it by the narratable self.¹⁴

The point, here, is not whether the author intended for the narrative to be coherent, but that *readers expect and will try to create coherence out of the many different things that appear in a text*. Schwarz calls this our "rage for order."¹⁵ In the following sections, we will pose reasons for this general human tendency to look for and create coherence.

However, Bakhtin's notion of polyphony deserves special mention here. Some texts have competing voices that are not brought into coherence or subsumed under a dominant voice, but remain in unresolved tension and conflict. Tull, commenting on the Book of Job, notes that such even occurs in biblical texts: "Although the internal dialogism of biblical texts usually moves toward resolution... there are texts in which the competing discourses are allowed to remain in tension."¹⁶ Where polyphony can be identified, readers recognize this as the authorial design of the text: it is what the author expects her readers to find. So readers construct a voice for each character, and set these in dialogue without coming to resolution. In short, this author's about-ness is the abstract notion of 'unresolved dialogue.' A similar analysis is offered for open texts and interrogative texts (Chapter 2).

In summary, we have suggested that readers attempt to impose coherence on the text's elements, beginning at the level of an alphabet and grammar, moving up to the creation of themes, and reaching its culmination at the level of plot, genre, and meaning. Some textual elements will fit into common cultural designs (e.g., the alphabet used), and these can be validated intersubjectively within a culture, and at times even across many cultures. When readers locate such a design, they can even say that the design is 'in' the text. Some may even conform to standard designs that are, intentionally, open and multi-voiced.

14 Adriana Cavarero, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (London: Routledge, 2000), 42; author's parenthesis.

15 Daniel Schwarz, "A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, ed. Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 15.

16 Patricia Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in *To Each Its Own Meaning: Biblical Criticisms and Their Application*, rev., ed. Stephen McKenzie and Stephen Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 172. This goes to the issue of whether polyphony is 'objectively' in the text, and this devolves to the twin issues of desire (if readers desire to find polyphony, they will adopt a method designed to 'find' it) and design (certain texts cannot be brought into coherence without the design of polyphony).

On the other hand, some textual designs may not fully conform to standard cultural types, and so resist the guesses imposed by the reader. This is a manifestation of textual resistance, *where the reader's application of an initial guess constructs elements that fail to fit into the design suggested by that initial guess*. When such occurs, the reader's central strategy opens with a reevaluation of the initial guess.

After Guesses Go Bad

While readers desire coherence and bend textual elements to create it, they still encounter disjunctions. This results in cognitive disequilibrium, where new information fails to cohere with the structure created by the initial guess. Such bits are disorienting because they cross the reader's expectations, and so put the assumption of writerly coherence into jeopardy. But this does not mean that the reader gives up on the original guess, and either casts about for a new one or assumes that the piece is fragmented. After all, readers already have some evidence for the initial guess, and one bit of evidence against this guess will not cause them to shift to another.

Rather, readers recognize that writers often transgress the boundaries of existing cultural models. Indeed, writers are renowned for playing at the edges of linguistic and literary conventions. So, when the first discordant 'bit' is recognized, readers generally engage in a variety of strategies designed to restore coherence.

In our example of the *Demon Possessed Boy*, readers may decide to retain their initial guess, of physical causation, and reshape all elements into this category. They might do this by construing the story as a deception: Jesus knows that the child has epilepsy, but is trying to fool the crowd in order to obtain followers. Indeed, readers can find similar examples in the surrounding literature.¹⁷ Alternatively, readers might assume that the narrative fits into their initial guess, but that the author is creatively playing with literary conventions. These readers might conclude that the author is poking fun at the religious belief of 'spiritual involvement' in a post-Enlightenment world. As a third alternative, readers might assume that the notions of possession and exorcism represent a form of resistance to the colonial incursions of the Roman Empire. Horsley constructs an anthropological model where "possession by spirits is intertwined with invasion of alien forces, particularly imperial conquest and

17 Cf. *Bel and the Dragon*, 1–22, where the miracle is designed to fool the people into believing that Bel is a god, and so deserving of worship and gifts.

domination.”¹⁸ Here exorcism has a protective function, where the people mystify power relations so that they exorcise ‘spirits’ instead of “engaging in what would have been suicidal action against their conquerors . . .”¹⁹

However, when these solutions are applied to the whole of that gospel, they produce even more serious disjunctions, and this suggests that the initial guess itself is the problem. As earlier, readers already have some evidence for the initial guess, but once the disjunctions become of such magnitude as to render the guess problematic—and each reader will have a different threshold—they will consider other cultural options. In our example, readers may decide that ‘physical causation’ creates too many disjunctions, and so consider other types of causation.

Now, most post-Enlightenment readers are aware of magical causation and spiritual causation, even though they may not accept the validity of such. From these options readers make a different guess, which they then use to create a new set of textual objects. Perhaps, they will attempt the guess that Jesus functions as a *theios anēr*,²⁰ or as a higher level demon,²¹ or that this story better fits the fantasy of some Hellenistic novels.²² From these they produce a new design, which they again consider for disjunctive elements. In this way readers oscillate between the cultural options available to them, in an attempt to utilize the textual objects created by each option to produce a more thoroughgoing design. In each attempt, the guess is intended to gather more elements into coherent themes, despite the fact that disjunctions are always created and complete coherence is never achieved.

Our point is that readers apply a variety of solutions, and evaluate some solutions as doing a better job of reducing and explaining disjunctions than others. If the guiding principle is developing a thoroughgoing design, then all solutions will not be equal. In recognizing disjunctions, applying multiple

18 Richard Horsley, “My Name is Legion,” in *Experientia*, vol. 1, ed. Frances Flannery, Collene Shantz, and Rodney Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 51. For problems with this view, see Christian Strecker, “Jesus and the Demoniacs,” in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 117–133, esp. 122.

19 *Ibid.*, 56.

20 So Theodore Weeden, *Mark-Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 55.

21 The suggestion made by Jesus’ detractors in Mk. 3:22, which finds support in the surrounding literature (cf. Jub. 10:1–9).

22 For example, J.R. Morgan writes that the author of *Daphnis and Chloe* “parades his unreality . . . it is a literary holiday, whose whole point is that the world it depicts does not, and never could exist” (“Daphnis and Chloe,” in *The Greek Novel in Context*, ed. J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman [London: Routledge, 1994], 65).

solutions, and evaluating the efficacy of each, *readers are showing that they are not rigidly controlled by the text, by their initial guess, or by their culture*. Indeed, these readers are acting as if they are subjects.

Coherence and the Self

It is clear from our discussion that authors write with some coherent designs, at least at the level of the alphabet, words, and sentences. As explored in Chapter 2, this is a direct consequence of writing being an intentional act. But why do readers look for and attempt to create coherence from the many elements of the text? At a surface level, it is because they have projected this principle upon the author.

Generally speaking, readers project their own way of writing, at some level of abstraction, upon the author. After all, readers use themselves as a model for the writing process. When they read: “Bill walked to the store,” they assume coherence within the convention of the sentence: ‘Bill’ is the one doing the walking, and not ‘Mary’ from a later sentence. Readers assume that the sentence is coherent because this is the way they write, based on the linguistic conventions of their own culture. *Readers project this upon the author, so that—at least in part—the author becomes a cipher for each reader!*

The same occurs at the level of the paragraph. Consider the following sentences: “Mr. X was involved in a school fight. It is reported that he was teased by students for his conduct. He appears to have been relatively isolated.” Although there are no formal causal connectives between the fight and the teasing, or between the teasing and the isolation, readers make these connections based on an assumed coherence between the sentences of a paragraph (a literary convention for 21st century English). In this way, the notion of ‘a paragraph’ is based on a public language convention (sentences in a paragraph are about the same topic). As this is the way readers usually write, they simply project this convention upon the present author. In a similar way, but at a higher level of abstraction, readers assume that a text is about something that the author wants to communicate, because readers would only engage in publishing a text if they wanted to communicate something.

Alternatively, these forms of coherence could be explained as a simple reiteration of culture, where the author is unconsciously replicating her culture’s institutions (types) in an ornamental form (tokens). However, we have already noted how authors violate cultural conventions by using their subjectivity in creating ‘the new.’ A simple reiteration of culture cannot account for this. On the other hand, reader projection can account for such violations, for the

mechanisms of violating conventions and creating newness are common to both reader and author (hermeneutic circle, supervenience, divergent thinking). Thus, a more complete description is found in our notion of reader projection, where readers project how they write—a manifestation of their culture's conventions along with the several ways they subjectively violate these—upon the author.

But this notion of 'reader projection' only moves the question about coherence back one level. Now we must ask why readers choose to write with coherence. Readers, who also write at various times in their lives, engage in writing as an intentional act. They begin with an image or idea in mind, and start writing with the goal of creating a written work which reproduces that image/idea. For example, that person may begin with the desire to create a mystery story which shows how one only has perspectives on the world. As that person engages in writing, he utilizes the form of the 'mystery genre' from his culture, but organizes the various elements to 'show' that the detective only garners a collection of equally possible perspectives. In this way the text coherently hangs on the genre of 'mystery story,' with the intentional object of 'perspectivism.'²³ Even when the intentional objects are multiple and contradictory, as in a post-modern novel or polyphonic novel, each functions as a 'theme' or 'voice,' with various bits of meaning fitting coherently in the construction of each. Readers simply project this way of writing, i.e., writing as an intentional act, upon the author.

But while writing is engaged as an intentional act, this still does not explain why readers organize this act under the notion of coherence. The roots for this are likely found in something that we might call an inner template. Authors do not write *de novo* or *ex nihilo*, but begin at some location within which to conceptualize the 'how' and the 'what' of writing. Earlier we noted that authors always begin within a culture—with a cultural template—and reproduce some of that culture's forms in their writing. Readers also use cultural templates, as tied to their own culture. But both also use a deeper template, which is their grasp of their own 'inner self.' This is what Cavarero means, where she writes that the reader finds coherence in a narrative by using the model of "the narratable self."²⁴ Let us spend a few moments examining this template.

23 Applying Aristotelian categories to this, genre functions as a *formal cause*, while the meaning as a *final cause*.

24 Cavarero, *Relating Narratives*, 42. Similarly Richard Gerrig ties the psychology of identity to the person's ability to relate a coherent narrative ("Psychological Approaches to Narrative," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan [Oxon: Routledge, 2005], 472). However, as Mitscherling

People generally act, at any point in time, as if ‘the self’ is a central core (characteristics, drives, emotions) with an executive function (decision making).²⁵ This core has shifting characteristics across time, as it is a progressive narrative; but at each point in time, the person views his or her ‘self’ as a momentary manifestation with definable characteristics. We will call each momentary manifestation, along with its executive function, the ‘present self.’ When various roles are called for, the present self makes a choice among the many roles. Indeed, it may even resist the role that is specifically called for, as when readers perform a resistant reading. Readers may even list reasons for rejecting that role, further showing that they *both recognize the role which the text calls for, and have a present self which rejects that role*. Even if the self as a ‘present self’ is a fiction, it is one of sufficient power to organize the disparate events of one’s life and synthesize them into a coherent notion of identity . . . and this view of the self is held so tight-fistedly that it can resist outside evaluations, expectations, and role-positions.

Upon making this suggestion, we note that questions concerning the ‘plurality of identity’ are generally treated by the person as irrelevant. In almost all decisions, people act as if their present self is making that decision. People do not see themselves as a democracy of many equal selves, all voting over each decision, as if decision-making were a function of arithmetic. People may assume that they are composed of multiple selves, by fulfilling a variety of roles or subject positions, but they do not make decisions this way.

This notion, of a present self, also goes to the issue of how the self is affected by the surrounding community. Some suggest that the self is a reflection of the evaluations given to it by others, and the self is composited through these evaluations (‘looking-glass self,’ ‘being for others’). If this were the whole composition of the self, then people would necessarily be multiple. But, in fact, people recognize and weigh these evaluations . . . or rather, the present self

appropriately warns, we must be careful not to construct “the self” solely as a series of predicates, as this would constitute a denial of subjectivity (*Aesthetic Genesis*, 133).

- 25 This discussion is not about what the self actually is, but only how people grasp the construct. Indeed, for most postmodern authors, the self is multiple. For example, Eddy Zemach calls singular pronouns, such as “I” or “me,” linguistic errors, which “are chosen precisely because they make nice wholes, and for no other reason” (“Looking Out for Number One,” in *Philosophy: An Introduction Through Literature*, ed. Lowell Kleiman and Stephen Lewis [St. Paul: Paragon House, 1992], 236). Michel Foucault calls these “shifters,” and concludes that these “simultaneously give(s) use to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy” (“What Is an Author,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch [New York: W.W. Norton, 2001], 1631). For an opposing view, see footnote 27.

weighs these, and decides which to accept as 'self' and 'not self.' Evaluations from the other may create lingering doubts about one's identity, but just this 'recognition of doubts' shows that a present self is already at work in reflecting on these evaluations.

This also bears on the notion of how one's identity persists across time. People do not see themselves as a series of unattached selves, as if the present self is unattached to the 'ten-minute-ago self.'²⁶ People pragmatically solve the issue of 'personal persistence' by assuming that both are the same self, even though with some change. So Ricoeur writes that memory is "the temporal component of identity, in conjunction with the evaluation of the present and the projection of the future."²⁷ Because of this persistence, people act as if they (and others) are ethically responsible for their prior decisions. People act as if their present self has the executive function for actions, and through a chain of (selective) memory and mental states, they claim responsibility for those actions.

Because of this pragmatic approach to the self, whether an illusion or not, humans generally conceive of themselves as singular, and as manifesting this singularity through the various roles they assume. This notion is the template upon which readers organize other narratives, including the written one. So Chatman suggests that humans have "a powerful tendency to connect the most divergent events" of a novel, because this is how they arrange their own personal narratives.²⁸ He suggests that this is due to an inner disposition:

26 In philosophy, this is called the "persistence problem." Note that other cultures may not hold the assumption presented here, such as those who accept demon possession or zombies.

27 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 81. This is a modification of the Lockean hypothesis, with additional accounts of psychological states, selective memory, and the like. Similarly Eric Olson writes: "The best way forward is to explain mental continuity in terms of causal dependence . . . you are psychologically continuous with some past or future being if your current mental features relate to those she has then by a chain of psychological connections" ("Personal Identity," in *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Stephen Stich and Ted Warfield [Malden: Blackwell, 2003], 360). Also cf. Anthony Quinton, who has argued that identity consists of the "mental states connected by continuity of character and memory" ("The Soul," in *Philosophy: An Introduction Through Literature*, ed. Lowell Kleiman and Stephen Lewis [St. Paul: Paragon House, 1990], 209).

28 Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 47.

That narrative experiment in which the reader shuffles his own story from a box of loose printed pages depends upon the disposition of our minds to hook things together; not even fortuitous circumstance—the random juxtaposition of pages—will deter us.²⁹

Fludernik even addresses the tendency to construct a narrative out of the fragments of one's post-modern self, despite their resistance to a single story. She concludes: "In order to create a continuity between past and present, in order to lend meaning to the experiences that we have undergone, we construct a story of our life."³⁰ This suggests that the notion of coherence is an intrinsic category used to grasp and organize the world, much like the Kantian *a priori* categories of time, space, and causation.³¹

Thus, readers project coherence upon the author and her text. They use themselves as a model for the writer, and evaluate why 'she must have written' as a function of why 'they would have written.' This means that reading is characterized by provinciality and circularity, as readers reproduce their cultural beliefs, personal convictions, and inner template by projecting them onto the author/text. This projection is inescapable, for readers also never begin *de novo* or *ex nihilo*. Readers begin with their existing models, and will have to be convinced *by the text* of anything different . . . to the degree this is possible. We will return to this critical issue, of reader refiguration, below.

However, this does not mean that the underlying template is fully determinative of what one reads and writes. We are not making the Romantic assumption that genuine art is a mimesis of 'the self,' as determined by the authenticity of one's own experiences and emotions (Coleridge, Wordsworth,

29 Ibid.

30 Monika Fludernik, "Identity/alterity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 262.

31 In neuroscience, this is similar to the 'binding problem,' where "spatially separate neural systems cooperate to produce unified visual experience . . ." (Barry Dainton, "Coming Together: The Unity of Conscious Experience," in *The Blackwell Companion to Consciousness*, ed. Max Velmans and Susan Schneider [Malden: Blackwell, 2007], 210). This suggests that the brain is wired to create coherent objects. In addition to object unity, there is phenomenal unity and temporal unity. As Dainton notes: "This mode of unity—phenomenal unity—typically extends to the farthest reaches of our consciousness at a given time" (Ibid., 209). Extending this even further, MacIntyre and Carr have been summarized as suggesting that "narrative structure is immanent in action and experience" and not "imposed from outside" (Piet Verhesschen, "'The Poem's Invitation': Ricoeur's Concept of Mimesis and its Consequences for Narrative Educational Research," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 37, no. 3 [August 2003]: 451).

etc.). Rather, we are suggesting that readers generally project their notion of coherence—as based on this underlying template—upon the text, and in this way reading always contains a mimetic component. When readers create narrative worlds from the text, even if it is an imagined world with spiritual causation, they organize the events by this model. Readers of a postmodern novel may create a world that is characterized by fragmentation, but this can only be done by recognizing the existence of this deeper model in the first place, and this means that the surface expression only exists as it stands in relation to this model: one cannot recognize fragmentation without some grasp of coherence!

One final note needs to be made on this topic, of why readers look for coherence in a narrative. We have explored reasons under the rubric of projection and internal templates. But one further reason must be taken into account: reading proceeds because of a root desire. Reading always begins with an intentional state, such as a desire to encounter truth, to find romance, to be entertained, to engage another person, or to find patriarchy . . . to name just a few.³² Without some desire, no one picks up a book or selects a particular genre. This desire structures the reading process so that readers develop the 'object' that they desired in the first place. The reading process constructs and organizes the many elements of the text, at least in part, to meet that original desire. In this way the original desire bends all textual elements towards creating its object, so that reading is inherently biased towards rendering coherence out of the text. Of course, this is not the whole story . . . which brings us to the next section.

Reading and Subjectivity

As examined earlier, readers recognize certain designs in the text, and this causes them to make a series of initial guesses about that text. In choosing to follow these designs, they are taking on the role of the implied reader, which they are also constructing out of the text. In this role, they impose these 'found designs' upon the rest of the text, beginning with the conventions of an alphabet and progressing to the conventions of language and culture. As Shusterman writes:

32 John Maynard writes that "individuals find different kinds of reading and different styles of reading, following their interest and desires . . . the final authority is the individual reader who reads for her own interests and needs" (*Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* [Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009], 364).

A string of letters accidentally produced by a computer or by waves on the sand . . . would still depend for its meaning on an intentional act, here the intention of the reader to see and use the marks as a meaningful text, as language rather than as mere marks.³³

But readers can modify or resist that design, because readers are subjects who are not wholly controlled by their culture or the text. In the end, it all comes back to the readers and the choices they make.

For example, readers could resist the role of the implied reader, and take George Washington's biography as a fairy tale, or the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* as about robbing the rich. An intersubjective analysis of such a reading, from within the reader's interpretive community, might conclude that such a reader has misapplied various public language conventions. But nothing forbids such a (mis)interpretation. The fact that various narrative elements do not come to presence need not stop readers. They are free to apply wildly creative solutions to the disjunctive elements created by the initial guess. The story of the *Demon Possessed Boy* could be unified under the solution of 'poking fun' at those who believe in spiritual causation. Of course, there are ethical implications for such choices, but we will reserve that discussion for the next two chapters.

This places us squarely in the topic of 'readerly intention.' Earlier we noted that writing is an intentional act. Here we pose that reading is also an intentional act, or rather a group of intentional acts. We can examine these acts using our earlier terminology of desire, intentional object, purposeful structure, direction of fit, and conditions of satisfaction (Chapter 2).

Reading begins with a reader's intentional state, which is prior to any actual reading, and so prior to any readerly roles. When a person picks up a narrative, it is always on account of some interest or desire—it is never purely involuntary.³⁴ A desire is always a desire about something, no matter how

33 Richard Shusterman, "Interpreting with Pragmatist Intentions," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 169.

34 The question, here, is whether reading can be involuntary. This arose in the Searle-Derrida debate, as David Schalkwyk summarizes: "As Jacques Derrida argues . . . if it is possible for reading to be involuntary, then, even if it were to happen only once, any account of intentionality needs to account for this as an essential possibility" ("Giving Intention its Due?" *Style* 44, no. 3 [Fall 2010]: 312). Schalkwyk agrees, suggesting that reading may occur automatically, as if intentionality allowed for "an unconscious production of meaning or signification" (Ibid). On the other hand, Searle suggests that the skills of letter and word recognition are part of the "Background" of necessary skills, which are then used in intentional acts. I will expand upon Searle's direction. In the earliest stages of a child's

abstract or ephemeral that ‘something’ is. Each desire has an object, which is the thing that the desire is about, which we may call the intentional object. This is the thing, at the abstract level, that the reader desires to ‘find,’ and is prior to any actual act of reading.

But desire is only an intentional state, and as such does not have an intrinsic set of techniques or methods attached to it. So readers must adopt reading techniques which are designed to create the object of that desire. This means that the reading design, or interpretive method, does not create random, unattached, or neutral meanings. The reading design is purposeful: it uses the raw elements of the text to produce the object of the original desire.³⁵ If readers begin with the desire to find patriarchy, they will adopt methods which are designed to reveal patriarchy, and this is what they will create out of the text. Alkier even applies this notion to intertextuality, applying a different cultural encyclopedia on the basis of various readerly desires: “Should one only be interested in the *intention operis* . . . Should one want to investigate the history of reception . . . Should one be interested in useful or interesting readings . . .”³⁶ While it might seem that the selection of method determines one’s orientation towards the text, this is actually backwards. Readers begin with a desire, and this forms their basic orientation to the text. The method, and to some extent the initial guess, are dependent upon the desire itself.

This brings us to Searle’s notion of ‘conditions of satisfaction.’ Readers begin with some notion of what they desire to find (the intentional object). They

reading, the recognition of single letters and words require voluntary attention. Only by constant repetition do these skills become nearly automatic. The necessity of this kind of processing is highlighted by David LaBerge and S. Jay Samuels: “If each component process requires attention, performance of the complex skill will be impossible, because the capacity of attention will be exceeded. But if enough of the components and their coordinations can be processed automatically, then the load on attention will be within tolerable limits and the skill can be successfully performed” (“Towards a Theory of Automatic Information Processing in Reading,” *Cognitive Psychology*, 6 [1974]: 293). After becoming automatic, these skills function more like Searle’s “intention in action” category (something like goal-directedness in the performing of the action (cf. John Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984], 65). Our conclusion is that these *early voluntary tasks* (letter and word recognition) become automatic in service to higher order, intentional tasks (some of which will, through repetition, also become near-automatic). The continuation of reading reveals the higher order task, for such requires attention and desire . . . otherwise the reader simply puts the book down.

35 This is similar, in function, to Heidegger’s “preunderstanding.”

36 Sefan Alkier, “From Text to Intertext: Intertextuality as a Paradigm for Reading Matthew,” *HTS Theologiese Studies* 61, no. 1/2 (2005): 4, accessed May 5, 2014, doi: 10.4102/hts.v61i1/2.421.

then adopt a method which uses the text's elements to reproduce that object. This process reaches its end when the text actually comes to resemble that object. In Searle's terms, the 'conditions of satisfaction' for that process are achieved. However, importantly, this 'resemblance' is not the inner being of the text (the text's ontology), but only the way the method has rendered the text (the reader's epistemology).

In the end, the reader's desire functions as an intentional state, and so structures the reader's approach to the text: *it selects the method of interpretation, it applies that method towards certain goals (values), and it creates its own conditions of fulfillment*. However, as discussed earlier, the text still has an internal design which may resist the structure imposed by the reader's desire—an issue to which we will return below.

Reading as Reproduction

An implication of this model is that *readers do not create the author's voice from the text, but use the text to reproduce their own pre-reading elements*. Here we are examining the reader prior to picking up the text or making any interpretive guesses. These pre-reading elements are of two types, and each type is underlain by its own set of assumptions. The first pre-reading element is the object of the reader's original desire. This desire not only precedes any actual reading, but underlies and structures the way reading is done. It determines, at least in part, what the reader creates. If the reader desires to find patriarchal structures or economic oppression, this is what he will create from the raw elements of the text.

Only this object is not disconnected from the reader's grasp of the world. The desire itself is underlain by the reader's assumptions about the world, that is, the reader's symbolic universe.³⁷ A Marxist, who desires to find economic oppression in a text, likely lives in a symbolic universe where economics underlies the structures of culture and language. A post-modernist who desires to find fragmentation, likely lives in a symbolic universe characterized by a lack of metanarratives or sense of reality. Each type of reading will reproduce this

37 Jerome Neyrey uses the example of clean/unclean, which lead the reader "to consider the overarching 'system' of a culture or to reconstruct its 'symbolic universe'... the sense of order or the system of classifications that people use to organize their world" ("Clean/Unclean, Pure/Polluted, and Holy/Profane: The Idea and the System of Purity," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996]: 87, 88).

universe out of the elements of the text, so that the former reader will create an economically-structured narrative world, while the latter a fragmented narrative world. A similar analysis can be made for each reading method, from a feminist reading (the symbolic universe of female equality) to a scientific reading (the symbolic universe of physical causation).

In each of these examples, the reader begins with a worldview that is prior to any desire to read or actual act of reading. This worldview acts as a sort of fabric upon which the desire itself is located, and upon which the method must also be located.³⁸ Indeed, the reader's desire and method are heavily contoured by the assumptions of that symbolic universe. The reader may encounter a narrative which suspends certain elements of that universe, say of causality and temporality by engaging in magical causation and reverse time, but the reader's creation of this narrative world is still formed in relation to that symbolic universe, and cannot be understood without that foundation. This is simply another way of stating that readers create the 'possible world' of the narrative as founded upon, and so in relation to, their actual world.³⁹

Of course, the reader's symbolic universe also comes from somewhere, and that 'somewhere' has two parts. The first part is the reader's culture. Culture, especially through its language and social institutions, foists a symbolic universe upon the reader. Social institutions function to connect elements in the reader's actual world to the reader's underling symbolic universe, and so to provide meaning to those elements. Readers may be unaware of this system and its assumptions, but their culture and language are nonetheless shot through with them. So Habermas notes that language itself was formed by the enfranchised class, and that their assumptions still exert a force upon the language-user:

Rational reconstruction of a linguistic rule system... makes rules explicit of which the native speaker has an implicit command; but it

38 For an example, cf. Andrew Edgar: "(Horkheimer and Adorno) argue that Enlightenment reason, originally motivated by the desire to dispel myth and superstition, has itself reverted to myth. This occurs insofar as a positivistic scientific methodology, grounded in the quantification and mathematical manipulation of data, supposes itself to be the only valid means of acquiring knowledge" ("Adorno and the Early Frankfurt School," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 114).

39 In 'possible worlds theory,' this is the stance of actualism. Cf. Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1994), 21–23.

does not, properly speaking, make the speaker aware of unconscious presuppositions.⁴⁰

Or, as Salkeld puts it: “Language games may bear dark histories which reach beyond the aesthetic structure of the work of art.”⁴¹ Indeed, Bakhtin views all literary elements, down to the category of words, as tied to social and ideological worlds: “All words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour.”⁴² Gowler applies this to the gospel text:

Jesus’ words were . . . a rejoinder in a greater dialogue, incorporating, in different ways, the words of others who had preceded him, whether from the Hebrew Bible, traditional repertoires, or the *polyglossia* of the first-century Mediterranean world.⁴³

Thus, reading is actually a reproduction of various cultural elements, as rooted in the reader’s symbolic universe and as ordered by the reader’s social institutions. In the end, the reader reproduces his culture out of the raw elements of the text, so that—at least in part—the reader neither produces anything new nor engages in any genuine learning.⁴⁴ In short, readers function as a site for cultural reproduction.

However, this is not the whole story. As opposed to the human being a mechanical reproduction of culture, the reader is also a subject. This brings us to the second origin of the reader’s symbolic universe, which is located in the reader’s experiences. As examined in Chapter 2, prelinguistic children experience the world through their senses and *a priori* categories, and these shape their initial view of the world. They will later attach words to these experiences and—in the ‘one-word’ stage—map these experiences onto words. In this way subjective elements slip into each person’s use of language, so that one’s use of words is not exactly like that of others. Even when children learn the language

40 Jürgen Habermas, “On Hermeneutics’ Claim to Universality,” In *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 298.

41 Salkeld, “New historicism,” 60.

42 M.M. Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 291.

43 David Gowler, “‘At His Gate Lay a Poor Man’: A Dialogic Reading of Luke 16:19–31,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 250, accessed May 7, 2014, ATLASerials, Religion Series, EBSCOhost.

44 Note the similarity of this argument to Meno’s Paradox.

system (*langue*), brute experiences continue to shape language usage. We have even shown how adults are capable of creating newness, through specialized applications of the hermeneutic circle, lateral thinking, and supervenience (Chapter 3). These notions suggest that one's symbolic universe is not solely a product of natural language and culture, but is more completely described as a combination of subjective and cultural elements. So, as we earlier concluded, *readers are located by a culture that they are also in process of locating*.

At times humans even break out of their symbolic universe and reshape the boundaries of their social institutions, as in the creation of a paradigm shift. In the reading process, such 'breaking out' or 'reshaping' manifests itself in the grasping of a new metaphor, the finding of defamiliarization, the recognition of a malapropism, and the ability to do a resistant reading. These suggest something like Davidson's 'passing theory of interpretation,' where readers move out of their normal reading patterns, that is, those cultural patterns that constitute the conventions of reading. As Davidson writes, the speaker:

... may deliberately dispose the interpreter to modify his prior theory ... what the speaker and interpreter know in advance is not (necessarily) shared, and so is not a language governed by shared rules or conventions.⁴⁵

Or, as Miller puts it, a reading may be "interventionist, initiatory, inaugural."⁴⁶

In the end, reading is a dialectical process where readers function *as an object of culture*, in reproducing their culture out of the elements of the text, and *a subject of culture*, in using specialized processes to generate newness.⁴⁷ This means that the reproductions of reading include both the reader's culture and the reader's subjectivity. Thus, while reading may ostensibly reproduce the object of the reader's desire, it only creates this object as located by the reader's culture and subjectivity. This suggests why two readers, from the same culture who read the same text with the same desire, create similar but not identical meanings.

45 David Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 479, author's parenthesis. We will evaluate his "passing theory" in Chapter 7.

46 J. Hillis Miller, "How to be 'In Tune with the Right' in *The Golden Bowl*," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, ed. Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 283.

47 This is a nod to Hegel's human as a "subject of history" vs. an "object of history."

Now let us turn to the *second reproduction of a pre-reading element*. When the reader's desire selects a method, the reader also selects the assumptions that underlie that method. Historically, it was thought that the introduction of method would eliminate the idiosyncratic bias of readers.⁴⁸ In this way, the meaning found through the application of method would be neutral and objective, representing something like 'textual truth.' This was especially the case for methods developed under the constraints of logical positivism, as these methods were founded upon scientific principles, so that a strict application of method would result in 'interpretive facts.' But in reality, this only moved the assumptions that form bias back one step. Now the bias involved the assumptions that were used to formulate the method itself.

All methods are based on philosophical assumptions. Readers may select a method based on some initial desire, but if that method was adopted from an outside source, then it is underlain by someone else's assumptions. Readers may not recognize these, as most texts do not delve into the assumptions behind these methods (mystification), but only outline the techniques and interpretive moves in a convincing way. Nevertheless, the method's creator employed a series of assumptions in designing that method, and the techniques represent a concrete outworking of those assumptions. Indeed, those assumptions structure the design of the method, *so that the method reproduces its own assumptions in every general application of that method*. When Thomas Jefferson cut all of the miracle stories out of his New Testament, he simply produced a document that validated his Enlightenment assumptions about the world: the text became just another Enlightenment voice.

For a more detailed example, let us consider a type of feminist method, where a reader recognizes and critiques patriarchy by engaging a hermeneutics of suspicion, a resistant reading, a reading from the margins, and a creative retrieval of the woman's voice. These methods are based on feminist assumptions about the world. These assumptions might include (based on the type of feminism employed) that males are fundamentally different from females, males are the enfranchised group, males use ideology to maintain gender structure through the mechanism of hegemony, and women are the oppressed group who are immasculated when they read male-literature. Thus male-literature is not to be read in the 'normal' way, if it is to be read at all, while

48 Wallace Martin: "Critics justify their explanations by referring to the text and using accepted interpretive procedures so that they will not be accused of subjectivity in a profession that prizes scientific, objective methods . . ." (*Recent Theories of Narrative* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986], 158).

female-literature is to be read in the 'normal' way and is to be preferred (cf. the gynocentric movement).

When a reader employs this feminist method, she reproduces these assumptions. The 'hermeneutics of suspicion' warns the reader that the text is really about male ideology, and so reproduces the assumption that enfranchised males use ideology to maintain gender structure. The 'resistant reading' warns the reader that the normal reading of a male text is damaging, and so reproduces the assumption that males are fundamentally different from females. The 'creative retrieval' tells the reader that the woman's voice is suppressed in the text, and so reproduces the assumption that women are oppressed by men. Readers who use this feminist method reproduce these assumptions at some level, whether they recognize them or not.

One problem, here, is that most readers are unaware of even choosing a method.⁴⁹ For example, literalists often fail to recognize that they use a definable method which is founded upon assumptions (in this case, of Platonism). Certain schools even proclaim a 'rejection of method' as the starting point for interpretation. For example, Heidegger writes the following about art interpretation:

Only one element is needful: to keep at a distance all the preconceptions and assaults of the above modes of thought, to leave the thing to rest in its own self . . . let it rest upon itself in its very own essence.⁵⁰

Similarly, Sontag recommends that one experience art as "the luminousness of the thing itself, of things being what they are."⁵¹ However, each 'natural' way of reading is only natural to a particular group within a particular culture, and contains a hidden metaphysics that was constructed and propagated from yet earlier cultural dialogues. This is the case for all methodological stances, including the stance of deconstruction. As Rorty notes:

49 Geoffrey Harpham argues that all readers use methods as attached to principles and values ("Ethics and Literary Criticism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], esp. 381–382).

50 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of a Work of Art," in *Martin Heidegger—Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), 161; also see 166.

51 Susan Sontag, "Against Criticism," in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Picador, 2001), 13.

The thought that a commentator has discovered what a text is really doing—for example, that it is *really* demystifying an ideological construct, or *really* deconstructing the hierarchical oppositions of western metaphysics, rather than merely being capable of being *used* for these purposes—is, for us pragmatists, just more occultism.⁵²

All reading is interpretation, and all interpretation is located by philosophical assumptions. Because these assumptions are often hidden (mystified), they tend to function in a preconscious manner. To the degree these function in a preconscious way, *they give the illusion of being 'natural' and 'beyond question.'* In this way, language and interpretive method use the reader, functioning as a preconscious ideological control (hegemony) in the creation of meaning. Of course, as argued earlier, the reader also locates language, and has creative processes available for creating newness. Here we are simply emphasizing the other side of the dialectical equation.

In the end, there is no space of 'clearing' or 'unconcealedness,' as Heidegger suggested, where things reveal themselves for what they are.⁵³ The idea that texts disclose themselves in directness, as if unmediated and so more genuine and authentic, is so much romantic nonsense. The text is not a mind or a presence that exerts an unmediated experience upon its readers, as if the mind were a blank slate upon which the text directly imposes its will. All reading occurs through the pre-processing of desire and method, and these always reproduce their own assumptions from the raw materials of the text. Thus, at the most basic level, every reading turns every text into *an allegory of the reader's desire and the reader's method* . . . at least partially. Readers will attempt to synthesize these into a coherent account, which they will call 'the meaning of the text,' but the text only comes to presence as an ornamental form of these. The text is not a subject, it does not have a will, and it does not make its own way in the world . . . though it does have that nagging design which readers can only suppress with creative work.

Indeed, it is only at this level of 'design' that the text has anything that could be called an *intentio operis* (intention of the text), as if on the way to a *sola scriptura*.⁵⁴ The design does exist, and because of its ontologic nature, the text is only suitable for certain types of realization (it cannot come to presence as a

52 Richard Rorty, "The Pragmatist's Progress," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1992), 102–103.

53 Heidegger, "The Origin of a Work of Art," 175, 184.

54 On *intentio operis*, see Eco, "Overinterpreting Texts," 64.

bicycle or football). But beyond abstract generalities, codes and structures are only made flesh—given *parole*—through the application of desire and method, as located by the reader's culture (symbolic universe, cognitive maps, social institutions, etc.). Meanings, at any level beyond the abstractions of structure, are culturally and existentially determined, so that the reader's desire and method—and especially how and why such are chosen—are of paramount importance.

Summary and Example

In this chapter, we began with the notion that readers start with dots on a page. However, our discussion has shown the inadequacy of this notion. Readers actually begin with several pre-reading elements. First, the reader begins with a desire, and this desire shapes and contours the meaning he or she creates. As this desire is located by the reader's symbolic universe, the 'meaning of the text' represents a reproduction of the reader's most basic assumptions about the world. In this way *the meaning of the text is a reproduction of the reader's desire and his or her culture's assumptions about the world*. Second, the reader's desire selects a method, which is utilized to produce the object of the reader's desire. But this method is underlain by its creator's assumptions, and not necessarily those of the user. These assumptions also shape the elements of the text, so that *the meaning of the text is a reproduction of the assumptions undergirding the method itself*. Third, the reader is a subject who is capable of using his or her subjectivity to create textual objects that are not suggested by culture or method. The reader is not confined by those limitations, but reproduces bits of his or her subjective world in every reading. In this way *the meaning of the text is a reproduction of the reader's subjectivity*.

When readers come to those opening marks on the page, they make a guess about the various linguistic and literary designs. They do this by matching the cues (the opening letters and words) to existing models from their culture. However, this guess is not solely based on the data of those marks. It is not even a neutral guess. The opening guess is already biased by the reader's desire, method, and symbolic universe. Indeed, this is one place where these 'pre-reading elements' come together: all are utilized in the creation of those initial guesses. Indeed, the initial guesses represent a synthesis of these elements. They intrude upon the decision-making process before reading even begins. Let us see how this works by returning to our example of the *Demon Possessed Boy* (Mark 9:14–27), in this case as read by a post-Enlightenment reader who desires to find economic oppression in the text.

Before any actual reading occurs, this reader desires to find economic oppression. He matches this desire to certain Marxist/Liberation methods, as these are designed to reveal economic oppression. Thus he will employ a hermeneutic of suspicion that is oriented about class and economic issues. At this pre-reading stage, the reader's desire and method will predispose him to produce certain structures from the raw elements of the text: constructions of economic oppression, a materialistic world view, and the use of religion to maintain class structure. Finally, this reader's desire and method are located by his symbolic universe and social institutions, which include a physical theory of causation, a particular language, a societal class structure, and a capitalist market economy.

Next this reader begins to read the narrative and generate a series of initial guesses. The opening guesses are about the identity of the language conventions, beginning with the alphabet, and moving up the scale of complexity to words and sentences. These guesses involve a non-creative matching of cultural forms to the marks on the page, but the guess itself is formulated at the intersection of his desire, culture, and method. For example, this reader begins with the desire to read, as opposed to the desire to play 'catch,' and so engages in reading behavior instead of throwing behavior. His culture, through its social institutions, identifies these marks as letters and words, as opposed to mathematical equations, and dictates that they are read from left to right and in a particular syntax. While his method (Marxism/Liberation) does not play a part in the identification of the alphabet, it does participate in the location of words, as tied to capitalistic institutions, relations of power, and class structure. *Only on the basis of this intersection* do readers formulate the guesses that the marks are: a particular alphabet, combined into words with a particular syntax, and having a particular range of meanings.

The importance of these opening guesses becomes clear when they do not reflect the historical language of the text. For example, a person who makes the guess that the *King James Bible* is present day English will have trouble with Jude 1:12: "These are spots in your love-feasts..." Historically, this version is a form of Early Modern English, on par with the language of Shakespeare. Reading either text under the guess of Late Modern English will produce extensive disjunctions, causing readers to question their opening guesses.

As the reading progresses into the text, this reader constructs various characters that interact across time, which generates the interpretive guess that this is a narrative, and not a lecture or a grocery list. Here method increasingly plays a part, especially as Marxism reflects Hegel's "hostility to divorcing form

and content.”⁵⁵ In Marxism, forms are appropriate to a particular social context, as a manifestation of the economic base, and reflect its hegemony over the reader. As Lowenthal writes: “The epic as well as lyric poetry, the drama like the novel, have affinities of their own to a particular social destiny.”⁵⁶

As the reader is applying these guesses, he is also constructing the narrative world, which is inhabited by a sick child. While the notion of ‘sickness’ could engender a variety of guesses about the nature of illness, the symbolic universe and assumptions of Marxism are materialistic, and so bias this reader to make the guess of a physically caused illness. Additionally, the reader notes that the boy is labeled ‘unclean’ because of the sickness, so that the story revolves about the poles of clean/unclean. While the notion of ‘clean/unclean’ could be rooted in a variety of cultural systems, the selected desire and method bias the reader towards viewing this as a manifestation of class distinctions, and this generates the guess that the narrative is about class oppression.

The reader’s method increasingly sorts the various characters into classes, in this case the enfranchised class of the scribes/disciples and the disenfranchised class of the demon possessed boy/father. As this ‘sickness’ is due to physical causes, the notion of ‘demon possession’ is viewed as a cultural construct that has no basis in reality. Indeed, the reader’s desire, method, and symbolic universe—all three—suggest that ‘possession’ is simply a means for creating class distinctions: demon possession was propagated by the scribes/disciples in order to render the boy/father unclean, and so to disenfranchise them. The scribes/disciples may act as if they want to help, but their refusal to ‘cleanse’ the boy from this made-up disease suggests that they want to keep him in a permanent underclass.

55 Alex Callinicos, “Marxism and Literary Criticism,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 89.

56 Leo Lowenthal, “On Sociology of Literature,” in *Literature and Mass Culture*, trans. Andy Blunden (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1984); accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/lowenthal/1948/literature.htm>. He goes on to write: “The reader is looking for prescriptions for inner manipulation, an abridged and understandable psychoanalytical cure, as it were, which will permit him by way of identification and imitation to grope his way out of his bewilderment” (Ibid.). Similarly with Bakhtin, on which see Michael Vines, *The Problem of Markan Genre*, *Academia biblica* 3 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 54–57.

Then Jesus comes along. He cleanses the boy, but not by any miracle or exorcism—this is not part of the reader's symbolic universe and is explicitly rejected by Marxist assumptions. Rather, Jesus 'must be' teaching the boy/father that demons are not in the boy (no matter how the narrative actually presents the interaction), and so Jesus subverts the hegemony of class structure through teaching. The story is an allegory for how the enfranchised maintain class structure, and how Jesus disrupts this in favor of a classless society.

In this example, we can see how readers use pre-reading elements to make their initial guesses. Readers then use these guesses to create the next set of textual elements, and they evaluate the fitted-ness of these new elements to the initial guess. This is where a circular element intrudes: those new elements were formed by the initial guess, so that readers are evaluating the guesses *based on the elements created by those guesses*. In our example, the reader imposed the guesses of 'narrative,' 'physical sickness,' and 'class structure' onto the text, and constructed meaning based on these designs. He then evaluates those guesses by examining how well the developed meanings fits into the cultural designs of 'narrative,' 'physical sickness,' and 'class structure.' This suggests that the text is radically under the control of the reader's guesses . . . or at least of the cultural designs which supplied the cues for each guess. This reader then shapes the remainder of the text's elements to fit his guesses, and does this under the assumption of coherence to those cultural designs.

However, this reader also encounters some jarring disjunctions in the narrative. Let us focus on those dealing with the sickness and the healing. The first disjunction occurs when the father states that a spirit has made his son unable to speak (4:17). At the first disjunction, the reader does not abandon his initial guess (physical sickness), but assumes that 'spirit possession' is a social institution designed by the enfranchised to maintain class distinctions. But then the narrator assigns agency to the spirit (4:20) and states that the spirit left (4:26). Indeed, Jesus himself accepts the existence of the spirit, and not only orders it to leave (4:25), but does so in a way that maintains the usual 'treatment' of spirit exorcism. In doing so, Jesus fails to disrupt the class-based system, whereby the religious exorcists are kept in power! By the end of the narrative, there are so many major disjunctions that our reader cannot easily maintain the original guess. At this point, he may abandon his initial guess, of physical causation, and make a different guess . . . perhaps of a story-world that uses spiritual causation for illness.

But the fact that the reader recognized a disjunction, shows that 'the guess' is not wholly in control. If it were, then the guess would form each element as already within the cultural design of that guess (desire, method), so that full coherence would always result. The notion that readers only see "what my

interpretive principles permitted or directed me to see,"⁵⁷ is reductive. Instead, various designs in the text manifest their existence as a resistance to those guesses—that is, to the initial applications of desire and method. Indeed, when readers recognize a disjunction, they find that the cultural design they invoked lacks the resources to create coherence. After all, it was through the application of that design that readers created the disjunction in the first place. To resolve these, they must step outside of their guesses and employ a different strategy.

This process, of recognizing and resolving disjunctions, shows the distinctive glimmers of subjectivity. When readers recognizes a disjunction, it is they who must decide if it is sufficiently disruptive to their taste to employ a new strategy. The text cannot help them in this process: it is not a presence that offers guidance or control. Rather, disjunctions cause readers to puzzle out the relationships between the elements they created from that text. As these elements were created by their application of an initial guess—as rooted in their desire, method, symbolic universe, and social institutions—readers may now consider moving beyond these various boundaries.

In our example, the disjunction occurred because 'spiritual causation' was not part of the reader's symbolic universe, and this notion can only be accessed by creating a temporary extension of his symbolic universe (a new 'possible world'). In other words, especially when readers recognize and reduce disjunctive elements, they are acting as subjects 'over' their method and culture. Readers are not passive receivers, but are actively engaged in determining the design, creating themes, and rendering coherence out of the seeming chaos. In this they are not fully confined by their method and culture, but can cheat them all. They are capable of creating newness out of the elements of the text.

In the end, readers shape the meaning of the text by three different processes, which come together in their opening guesses. Their originating desires generate *desire-based meaning*, their selection of method generates *method-based meaning*, and their use of subjectivity generates *subject-based meaning*. While the first two are located by their culture, the latter represents an attempt to cross their culture's horizons. In these three processes readers are acting upon the text, using it instrumentally to their own ends. They are treating the text as if it were just another object in the world. However, this is not the whole story, as the text—while not having a will or force of its own—does have a structural design which manifests itself as a resistance to certain guesses.

57 Stanley Fish, "Interpreting the Variorum," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 176.

When readers invoke a different social institution than the author used, *they create elements that fail to fit into that institution, and that institution generates expectations for elements that the text cannot meet*. If readers were able to identify the design that the author instantiated in the text, then another type of meaning would become possible: design-based meaning. We will turn to this issue in coming chapters.

Where do we go from here . . .

We opened this chapter with a story about an observer watching a chess game, but only having the player's actions and none of her mental acts. In a similar way, readers begin with the acts of the author, encoded as marks on a page. They do not begin with the author's intentional design, biography, or cultural assumptions, and they may never choose to examine these. They begin with the marks on the page, and they use these in the construction of desire-based meaning, method-based meaning, and subject-based meaning. This suggests, provisionally, that meaning is mostly a creative allegory of the reader's guess, as a manifestation of his or her desire, method, and subjectivity . . . although the text's design still has that nagging tendency to jut through, creating resistance and disjunctions to certain of those guesses.

Thus, it has become apparent that the author (Chapter 2) and the readers (this chapter) are in different relationships to the text, each beginning with different types of intentional states. The author may desire to communicate a 'something,' but readers may not be interested in communication at all. Indeed, some readers may desire aesthetic pleasure or comedic escape. They are under no formal obligation to the author, so that the author is excluded from the equation. They are also under no formal obligation to their interpretive community, so that the community may be excluded as well. As long as they keep their meaning to themselves, i.e., they do not act upon it, nothing necessarily stops or interferes with their interpretation. Readers can use the text as an object, treating it instrumentally to whatever end they so wish.

In short, when reading is *constituted solely as a relationship between a particular reader and the text*, then no outside forces can restrict interpretation and no outside forces can dictate 'better' readings. Authors, as well as outside interpreters and communities, are rendered irrelevant. Both are as good as dead with respect to the flesh-and-blood reader and 'his or her text.' Likewise, readers are under no obligation to follow the role of the implied reader or the values of the implied author, as these are no less objects than the text itself. A similar situation exists when the relationship is *wholly between a reading*

community and a text: neither the author nor any other community can dictate or impose its rules. These are, variously, the positions found in reader-response criticism, neo-pragmatism, and deconstruction.

For some readers, this situation of freedom is ideal, as it offers the opportunity to play with the text, to be without restraints, to express one's creativity, or to engage in outright hedonism. As Derrida notes, it is a world "without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation."⁵⁸ Or, as Bammer writes:

For a pluralist aesthete . . . the other is not a subject with whom to engage in an attempt to understand what 'difference' really means—what it has meant historically and what it feels like—but an object to be taken up in the self-serving quest for stimulation, entertainment, or new markets.⁵⁹

This creates an impasse for pragmatic theories, for each can only represent 'uses' of the text without evaluative criteria. As Latimer summarizes on neopragmatism:

Without foundations, the best we can do is tolerate each other's mighty poem, somehow keeping the conversation going between incommensurable selves as they all strive to escape the influence of every other self.⁶⁰

The only conclusion that one reader or community can say about another interpretation is: "Hummm . . . that is different!"

But is this the whole story? Here we might begin with a different question: if the text is a manifestation of the author's subjectivity, should it be under the control of the reader . . . indeed, should it be used instrumentally at all?

58 Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), 1125.

59 Angelika Bammer, "Xenophobia, Xenophilia, and No Place to Rest," in *Encountering the Other(s)*, ed. Gisela Brinker-Gabler (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 47. Bammer is addressing a story by G. Spivak.

60 Dan Latimer, "American Neopragmatism and Its Background," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 34; this is Latimer's summary of Rorty's neopragmatism.

Problems in the Reader's Paradise

The reader is unshackled . . . that was the point of the last chapter. The reader can use any language conventions he or she chooses. Meaning is open, as it is the reader's own creation. But this conclusion sits firmly on the notion of textual autonomy, namely that the text is not connected to the author, so that the author is wholly irrelevant to the reading process. Here readers are not restricted by the author's language or the intended audience's culture, but are free to enculturate the text as they see fit. Of course, readers are still shackled by their own assumptions, culture, methods, and to some extent by the internal design of the text. So we might revise our opening sentence to: 'Readers are partially unshackled, at least from the intentions, desires, culture, assumptions, and history of the author.'

Once the assumption of autonomy is in place, readers are free to play with the text in any way they choose. It is simply one among many objects in the world, and objects have no rights. In the words of Barthes: "Hence, no vital 'respect' is due to the Text . . ."¹ Readers can construct various meanings from the text without any recognition of the author as the origin or a controlling presence. The author is as good as dead with respect to her text. So Mitchell comments on the work of Derrida and de Man: "In my eyes, the radical potential of their work . . . is the suggested separation of intention and the subject (thanks in great part to the separation of the text and the subject)."²

However, are texts wholly separate from their authors? Imagine that an art thief writes the following note: "I will pay you \$50,000 to steal painting xyz from the museum. Do it by bypassing the security systems, according to my enclosed instructions. Signed: Ms. X." When the police recover this note, what are they to do? Perhaps, as readers of modern literary theory, the police decide that the text only has meaning as the reader construes it, so that the author's meaning does not count. In this case they cannot attach any authorial intention of 'robbery' to the note. Indeed, if they pick her up for questioning, she might simply respond: "That's only how you interpret the note . . . it reflects your understanding and not mine!" Or the police might decide that the text

1 Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1473.

2 Kaye Mitchell, *Intention and Text: Towards an Intentionality of Literary Form* (London: Continuum, 2008), 146; author's parenthesis.

takes on a life of its own, so that the text is unconnected to its origins. In this case the police cannot tell what the note meant when it was written, and so cannot arrest its author. Or the police might decide that it is impossible to know what the note meant, as the author and reader are simply playing with language. When they pick her up for questioning, she might respond: "I was thinking of 'steal' as it is used in the phrase 'to steal a glance.' I was paying the man \$50,000 to look at the painting!" Of course, the police do pick up Ms. X for questioning, and just this shows that we consider an author to be connected to her text . . . though we may not know how.

This brings us to the central issue in the discussion: the author reproduces her subjectivity in the text through the implied authorA, so that the text becomes her voice in the world. But when textual autonomy is invoked, the author and her voice are rent asunder, and this carries a variety of consequences . . . such as not picking up Ms. X for questioning. In this chapter we will explore this problematic notion of textual autonomy, examining its aspects in three sections. Section 1 will deal with its roots and origins, Section 2 with its consequences, and Section 3 with the most common way of retooling this notion (that literary language is not about communication).

Section 1: Textual Autonomy and Literary Causation

Our discussion on textual autonomy begins with its assumptions, and these have to do with the nature of causation. The notion of literary causation, or aesthetic causation, has a long history. For example, some might suggest that the 'cause' of the text is culture, as we explored in the Death of the Author movement and new historicism. Others yet might turn to economic structures (Marx), psychological drives (Freud), or gender mythologies (feminism) as the 'cause' of the text. But if any of these are *the entire cause of the text*, then authorship is better characterized as reiteration or repetition, and not the creation of newness. The author begins to vanish behind the veil of language, and the notion of subjectivity becomes irrelevant. In such systems, interpretation, properly understood, is an exploration of culture, language, gender, economics, religion, and the like. In short, while we have shown that the human is a subject who is capable of creating newness, and even examined mechanisms by which this occurs, we still need to show that the author's subjectivity is, at least in part, the cause of the text.

The modern history of causation begins with David Hume. Hume rejected the notion of causation outright. He thought that the human mind formed connections between objects, because they were consistently connected in

space and time. In his example, when one billiard ball struck another, the observer consistently saw the second ball move, and so assumed a causal relationship between the two events. But these connections were not the result of logic, as no causal force could be seen or measured. For Hume there was only an assumed connection based on observation and experience, and this led to a habit of connecting the two events. He writes: "Reason can never shew us the connexion of one object with another, tho' aided by experience, and the observation of their constant conjunction in all past instances."³

As the cause and its effect were not logically connected, each could be studied independently of the other. One could characterize the path, trajectory, and velocity of the second ball without knowing anything about the first ball. One could study the effect without ever making reference to the cause. As Lyas summarizes:

It is an essential component of this (Humean) view that cause and effect be independently knowable . . . that which is the cause can be fully known without any reference being made to that which is the effect, and vice versa.⁴

This suggested that one could study a text without knowing anything about the author-as-cause. The text could be studied on its own, as if the text were an autonomous object. Carroll makes the connection clear:

Underlying this view is the conception of authorial intentions as private, episodic mental events *that are logically independent of the artworks they give rise to* in the way that Humean causes are logically independent of effects.⁵

3 David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book 1, Part 3, Section VI; 2nd ed., ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge and P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 92.

4 Colin Lyas, "Wittgensteinian Intentions," in *Intention & Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 138; parenthesis mine.

5 Noël Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," in *Intention & Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 100–101; italics mine. Also Lyas: "This is in effect to say that since intention and object are independent objects, a complete knowledge of that object which is the work of art is obtainable without need of reference to that entirely discrete object that is the intention of the artist" ("Wittgensteinian Intentions," 139).

Or, as Cleanth Brooks so nicely put it for the New Critics: "... the reduction of a work of literature to its causes does not constitute literary criticism ..."⁶

About the same time as Hume was breaking the linkage between cause and effect, Kant was writing about beauty in a way that would have the same effect. Kant posited the aesthetic notion of 'free beauty,' where beauty was no longer tied to, or reducible to, propositional concepts. As Kant writes: "Flowers, free designs, lines aimlessly intertwined in each other under the name of foliage, signify nothing, do not depend on any determinate concept, and yet please."⁷ Beauty is not about concepts or lessons: a painting is not about a moral lesson or about a particular color scheme. Indeed, free beauty does not serve any purpose, such as selling real estate or promoting moral development. Rather, free beauty would be like standing in front of a stunning sunset, consumed by its beauty, without ever reducing the experience to concepts of natural laws, cultural standards, or economic uses.

This contained an important implication, which was drawn out by later scholars: since beauty is not attached to concepts or purposes, it is also free from the author, the author's context, and the author's culture.⁸ Quite simply, the text stands on its own as an autonomous object, and can be studied without any reference to the author or the author's culture. Zima summarizes:

All of these theories are Kantian aesthetics insofar as they emphasise the autonomy of art and are strongly opposed to all attempts to reduce literature to heteronomous factors such as the author's biography, the social context or the reactions of the reader.⁹

6 Cleanth Brooks, "The Formalist Critics," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 25.

7 Cited in Paul Guyer, "The Origins of Modern Aesthetics: 1711–35," in *The Blackwell Guide to the Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 39. Immanuel Kant states that free beauty "presupposed no concept of any purpose ... satisfaction in beauty is such as presupposes no concept ..." (*Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard [New York: Hafner, 1951], 66–67). This meant that the aesthetic object was an end in itself, as it served no other purpose. In this way Kant separates free beauty from all instrumental uses of it.

8 Here the New Critics stepped beyond Kant. While Kant did detach the aesthetic object from political, economic, and cultural issues, he still maintained the connection of the artist/author. As Harold Langsam writes: "The basic thrust of Kant's answer is that a person can make no justified claims about an event unless he first discovers the cause of that event" ("Kant, Hume, and our Ordinary Concept of Causation," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 54, no. 3 [Sept 1994]: 643).

9 Peter Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory* [London: The Athlone Press, 1999], 5.

The reader only needs to eradicate his own interests, so that the text's pure and unsullied form can appear.

Taken together, Kant's and Hume's work suggested that literature is best approached without reference to the author's intentions, culture, or biography. The aesthetic text is an autonomous object that can exist on its own, as its own self-contained universe. In the literary world, these notions were most strongly developed by the New Critics. Monroe Beardsley, a representative of this school, calls this his "principle of autonomy." He writes: "... literary works are self-sufficient entities, whose properties are decisive in checking interpretations and judgments."¹⁰ As such, a text is no longer anchored in the author's intentions or her cultural context, so that the text can take on a life of its own. Veenstra summarizes:

Literary criticism as it was practiced by formalists, New Critics, and many others regarded the text as an autonomous entity... articulating the meaning and the literariness of a text in terms of its intrinsic language-system. Their scrupulous principles of analysis carefully warded off all links with the exterior environment, which, in effect, became a forbidden world of authors, readers, and social circumstance.¹¹

Ricoeur's notion of 'distanciation' also fits into this thinking, for he sees the text as creating its own event that is disconnected from the author's original desires. He writes: "What happens in writing... (is) the detachment of meaning from the event... (the) author's intention and the meaning of the text cease to coincide."¹² For Ricoeur, the text was designed for a particular situation in a particular context, but the text does not reproduce either of these for later readers. Readers assign some cultural context in reading a text, but usually end up assigning their own. For Ricoeur, distanciation is a positive aspect of reading, for now an ancient text can be meaningful to each new audience.

However, these schools are based on problematic assumptions. The Kantian hypothesis, and its child of New Criticism, are predicated upon the notion that

10 Monroe Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 24.

11 Jan Veenstra, "The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt: On Poetics of Culture and the Interpretation of Shakespeare," *History and Theory* 34, no. 3 (October 1995): 176.

12 Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 25, 29. Gregory Laughery summarizes: "For Ricoeur, a text or narrative has an author, but this author's intent is neither retrievable, nor is it significant for its reader" (*Living Hermeneutics in Motion* [Lanham: University Press of America, 2002], 136).

readers can approach the text without their interests, so that the autonomous and universal form can appear unsullied, as 'free beauty.'¹³ This is simply not the case. Nietzsche is humorous on the point:

When our aestheticians never weary of maintaining, in favour of Kant, that under the spell of beauty one can view *even* undraped female statues 'without interest', we may, to be sure, laugh a little at their expense . . .¹⁴

But deeper yet, reading always proceeds from a desire, and desire, as an intentional state, produces a design for reading.¹⁵ This design (method) uses the text to produce the object for the original desire: the initial desire predetermines what readers find. Thus, the text is never free of their interests, and so can never be a self-determinate, autonomous object. In a similar way, readers can never completely escape their culture. After all, their desire and method are always located by their symbolic universe and social institutions.

Indeed, the author expects her readers to come to the narrative with their cultural biases intact. She, as an implied authorA, designs her narrative upon those expectations in order to create specific effects. When a Western 21st century author opens her narrative with a man crying, she expects Western 21st century readers to create the positive notion of deep emotions. But such would not be the case for an Eastern 1st century author, such as Josephus, who wrote that Eleazar "feared that their whimpers and tears might unman even those who had listened to his speech with fortitude."¹⁶

The Humean hypothesis, of the separation of cause and effect, is also problematic. There are two issues here. The first issue involves the separation of a cause (the author) from its effect (the text). Here we return to the notion that writing is an intentional act. Before the author picks up her pen and paper, she represents to herself, at least in cursory form, what she wants to do and say in her writing. She also represents to herself, at least in cursory form, her

13 Mark Jancovich summarizes: "In other words, the New Critics were attempting to establish the superiority of the pure gaze over other modes of cultural appropriation, to present 'disinterested contemplation' as the legitimate and authorised way of consuming cultural texts" ("The Southern New Critics," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Modernism and the New Criticism*, vol. 7, ed. A. Walton Litz, Louis Menand, and Lawrence Rainey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 216.

14 Friedrich Nietzsche, *A Nietzsche Reader*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 135; author's italics.

15 On our rejection of reading as an involuntary act, see Chapter 4, fn. 34.

16 Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Books IV–VII, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 601.

audience and their language conventions. She then designs her act of writing so that it comes to resemble both. Searle summarizes:

My intention will only be fully carried out if the world changes so as to match the content of the intention . . . and the intention will only be fully satisfied *if the intention itself causes the rest of the conditions of satisfaction*.¹⁷

This suggests a mental form of causation, which Searle calls “intentional causation.” As he writes: “In such cases there is an internal connection between the cause and the effect, because the cause is a representation of the very state of affairs that it causes.”¹⁸ In short, the human causes an effect by mentally imagining the effect, and then creating a structure specifically designed to bring about that effect. As Searle quips: “To explain an action is to give its causes.”¹⁹

Another author that posed a form of intentional causation is Wittgenstein. He uses the example of expecting a friend:

What’s it like for me to expect him to come?—I walk up and down the room, look at the clock now and then, and so on . . . to expect X means to act as described . . . the definition can be used to read off the object of the expectation from the expectant behavior.²⁰

As an intentional state, ‘expectation’ produces its own design, which is manifested in particular actions. The expectation precedes the behavior and structures the behavior in a purposeful way, so that the expectation itself is manifest in the behavior. Carroll summarizes:

17 John Searle, “Intentionality (1),” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Samuel Guttenplan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 384; italics mine. This suggests agency, and so Duncan Salkeld has argued that no matter where “agency for meaning” is found, the “fact that we do not have agent-less verbs ensures that pronominal subject-positions (and so, by implication, subjectivity itself) will always be presupposed as notional starting points” (“Shakespeare and ‘the I-word,’” *Style* 44, no. 3 [Fall 2010]: 330).

18 John Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 60–61.

19 Ibid., 67.

20 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Kenny (Malden: Blackwell, 1994), 87.

However, this view of authorial intention (Hume's) gradually came to be challenged by another view (Wittgenstein's)...according to which an intention is thought to be a purpose manifest in the artwork, which regulates the way the artwork is... the intention is identified as the purposive structure of the work...²¹

The second problematic issue is Hume's notion that the examination of an effect (the text) is sufficient to give an adequate characterization of that effect (the text), without any need to reference its cause (the author). But the careful examination of an effect may not be sufficient to fully characterize that object. Consider our example of the Martian who moves his bishop horizontally. Scrutiny of this move results in a variety of possible characterizations: is the Martian cheating... or is he teaching the other player how to cheat... or is he teaching the other person how to catch someone who is cheating... or is he simply distracted... or is he acting out a part in a play... or is he playing a different game altogether? Careful examination of the context may allow the observer to exclude some of these possibilities. Yet even when this cultural and contextual material is accounted for, the observer may still not be able to fully characterize that act. A more complete characterization would require that the observer know something of the cause of the act, which returns us to the intention of the actor.

Indeed, this problem plays itself out repeatedly in our legal system, where juries are presented with all of the observations of some act, but still have trouble characterizing that act 'beyond a reasonable doubt': was the killing accidental, in self-defense, deliberate, out of passion, or due to a mental break? In the end, examination of the act, by itself, may be insufficient to adequately characterize the chess move, the crime, or the text.

Ricoeur's notion, that the text is not connected to its originating context, is also problematic. Certain texts are concretely rooted in their originating context, even to the point that readers are required to recreate the originating context. A key example is a legal will. When a lawyer writes a will, she encodes her client's wishes in a particular cultural and legal context, and expects all yet future readers to abide by the terms of that cultural and legal context.²² Such a document cannot 'take on a life of its own,' but is always tied to: *the originating context* (a legal event), *the author's desire* (to become active at the author's

21 Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," 101; parentheses mine.

22 Even if one assumes that this is a "technical language," this only moves the problem back one step. A technical language, just as any metalanguage, is tied to and temporally shifts with "ordinary" language.

death), *the activating event* (the death of the author), and *the original language conventions of the author* (her linguistic and legal culture). Now the exact cultural and legal context may be impossible to fully reproduce, and to this extent distanciation is a component of all conversation and writing. But language also contains sufficient resources to recognize and correct such breakdowns, so that distanciation is not an adequate characterization of the whole act of communication.

We can even move this discussion from specialized texts, such as wills, to less technical texts, such as narratives. When an author writes a narrative, she reproduces her culture in the text so that the originating context is reproduced in the text. This is easily detected by the disjunctions created when the author and reader utilize vastly different cultural systems. Consider the narrative of the *Demon Possessed Boy* (Mark 9:14–27). When a modern reader engages this text, he recognizes that his belief in physical causation does not seem to fit: the epilepsy is caused by “an unclean spirit.” He recognizes that the author (implied authorR) has reproduced a different set of beliefs and practices ‘in’ the text. The author and reader have each accessed a different social institution, so that each has different expectations of what ‘should’ occur next: the first century author anticipates an exorcism, while the modern reader expects a trip to the hospital and medicines. When the modern reader encounters the exorcism, he recognizes, at least partially, the different originating context.

Thus, while distanciation is a characteristic of all conversation and writing, it is never a complete process, and mechanisms exist for readers to both recognize and account for these shifts. While there are problems in reproducing the original context and in creating linkages between historical language shifts, these do not render the project impossible or useless . . . any more than the anthropologist’s or sociologist’s modeling of another culture is useless or impossible!

Across time, another root for textual autonomy arose. This later root, as found in Nietzsche and developed by the postmodernists, starts with a different set of assumptions (while this root is not generally addressed under ‘autonomy,’ it also generates a system where the text is disconnected from the author as an origin or controlling presence). Nietzsche developed the thought that all language was metaphorical.²³ This means that an object in the world is not attached to language in any fixed fashion, and does not project itself forward as a controlling presence for language: there is no presence of ‘the thing itself’ in language. From this position, modern semantics (beginning with Saussure)

23 Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 877.

and postmodern views of language (beginning with Heidegger) understood language as an arbitrary system, connecting words to other words, but not to actual objects.

Thus, meaning could not be stabilized by its attachment to objects in the world. Meaning only occurred through the attachment of words to other words, and the meaning of these, in turn, occurred through their attachment to the original word. Meaning recedes through this constant deferral, so that there is no concrete 'meaning' to any word. Rather, one only has the language system of differences and deferrals. Thus, the text is internally self-referential only, with *langue* (this system) assuming priority over *parole* (actual usage). Meaning is not controlled by reference to some outside origin, external presence, or transcendental center, and certainly not by reference to some author, historical context, or cultural institution.

In other words, the text functions as an autonomous object, with respect to the author. As Derrida famously states: "There is nothing outside of the text . . ." ²⁴ For Derrida, this is a positive loss, as it leaves the reader free to engage in:

. . . the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation. ²⁵

However, the Derridean hypothesis is based on a problematic assumption, namely that the language system (*langue*) can be separated from the life-world. This is simply not the case. As we have seen, the child at the 'one-word stage of language development' metaphorically attaches individual words to her experiences of the world. This attachment is anterior to the assimilation of the language system, so that her initial words are not connected to other words. At the one-word stage, the child has no language system in which deferral can take place, but only the metaphorical connection of 'the experience of pain' to 'ouch.' Each single word is grounded in the experiences of the life-world. Even after the language system has been assimilated, the brute facts of human experience continue to resist one's language categories, resulting in a reshaping of these categories (Chapter 2).

24 Cited in Simon Critchley and Timothy Mooney, "Deconstruction and Derrida," in *Continental Philosophy in the 20th Century*, ed. Richard Kearney, Routledge History of Philosophy, vol. 8 (London: Routledge, 1994), 445.

25 Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), 1125.

Our conclusion is that the *langue* is not independent of the life-world, but arises through an attachment to the life-world. Experience is primary, and language as *langue* is derivative. This is Ricoeur's point, in giving *parole* an ontological priority over *langue*:

The system (*langue*) in fact does not exist. It only has a virtual existence. Only the message gives actuality to language, and discourse grounds the very existence of language since only the discrete and each time unique acts of discourse actualize the code.²⁶

Indeed, the proof for this is that language changes across time: it is the creative uses of language in *parole* that cause the eventual shift in *langue*, and not the other way around. As such shifts cannot be predicted by the system (*langue*), due to the arbitrary connection between sign and sense (Saussure), they are by definition an extension across that system's horizons.

In summary, textual autonomy is a problematic concept. We began by examining its roots, as generally located either in Kant/Hume or in Nietzsche/Derrida. Each gives rise to entire schools of interpretation, the former to New Criticism, Russian Formalism, Narratology, and Structuralism,²⁷ while the latter to Deconstruction and radical forms of Reader Response. But despite their differences, all reject the connection between the text and the author, suggesting that she is not an authority who dictates the meaning of the text (e.g., in her actual commentary and speeches), a semi-mystical presence who indirectly dictates the meaning of the text (e.g., through her life's events and local presence), or a socio-political-economic marker that dictates the cultural location of the text. In these systems, the text floats free, and can exceed the author to 'mean' things that she—quite literally—could not have even imagined.

26 Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 9. Also see Laughery: "Ricoeur argues that language is dependent on the speaking subject's being in the world and that only the dialectic of sense and reference articulates this relationship... Language is not merely a system of inter-connected signs or codes..." (*Living Hermeneutics in Motion*, 36; cf. 37–39, 71). Cf. Marshall Sahlins' argument on cultural determinism: "Just because what is done is culturally logical does not mean the logic determined that it be done—let alone by whom, when or why—any more than just because what I say is grammatical, grammar caused me to say it" ("Two or Three Things that I Know About Culture," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 5, no. 2 [Sept 1999]: 409).

27 Zima writes: "...this Kantian conception of artistic autonomy underlies the theories of Anglo-American New Criticism, Russian Formalism, and Czech Structuralism" (*The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*, 5).

Next we critiqued the roots of autonomy and found serious problems. Indeed, its foundations crumble. As opposed to Kant, readers cannot approach a text without interests and cannot elide their culture. As opposed to Hume, causes are related to effects via intention, and effects can only be fully characterized by accessing their causes. As opposed to Ricoeur, something of the original context and situation are found in the text itself, and, in some types of linguistic objects (wills), are required for interpretation. As opposed to Nietzsche and Derrida, language is not wholly separate from the life-world, but is shaped by the same and thus remains attached. Given these problems, we reject the assumption of autonomy, and suggest that the author and text are linked through intentional causation, *so that the text can only be adequately characterized by including an account of that linkage.*

Section 2: The Consequences of Using Textual Autonomy

However, even if the basis for textual autonomy cannot hold, this in no way stops the reader. After all, readers are subjects, and are free to fulfill their desires as they see fit. This brings us to the consequences of utilizing textual autonomy in reading texts. If a reader decides to invoke autonomy, what are the consequences? In the end, does it really matter? In this section we will consider a variety of arguments suggesting, in the end, that it does.

Ethical Criticism and the Responsibility of the Author

A system that wholly separates the author from the text also detaches the author from any ethical responsibility for the text or its effects in the world. In the most radical forms of autonomy, the text and its meanings are never considered to be about 'communication.' Rather, depending upon one's interpretive assumptions, it is either about aesthetic pleasure as attached to a purposive form (e.g., Kant, New Criticism) or about the reader's creative use of the text (e.g., reader-response, deconstruction). The author does not transmit concepts to the audience, as they are not 'in' the text in the first place.

However, we have already shown that the author (implied authorA) is—at least partially—the cause of the text, where she reproduces her culture and her subjectivity 'in' the text. Further, we have shown that readers are capable of reconstructing some of her designs, and authenticating these by intersubjective agreement (beginning with an identification of the alphabet, grammar, and dialect, though with less agreement at higher levels of complexity). So, if the author consciously and deliberately instantiates the design of racism, readers from the intended audience might well be able to reconstruct it. It is

not that readers constructed racism because this is what they consciously or unconsciously wanted to find (although this remains a possibility), but that *the author structured the text so that her intended audience would construct racism*. Indeed, when the author reads her own text with sincerity, she reads from the position of her authorial audience (as an approximation of her intended audience), and ‘finds’ racist thinking. In short, readers do not only create what they want to find, so that the author cannot hide behind the reader’s voice.

But there are two problems with this argument. First, one might suggest that aesthetic language is not about concepts or ideology at all, but represents a different kind of language. In this scenario, the text cannot communicate the concept of racism, as it is not ‘about’ concepts or information. We will turn to this problem in the third section of this chapter. Suffice it to summarize that the distinction between the aesthetic uses of language (for pleasure) and ordinary uses (for information) cannot be maintained. Second, one might suggest that literary language does not create serious meaning, so that any meanings found do not really count. As this topic is important, both here and in the later discussion (on how literature shapes readers), we will spend some time on this complicated topic.

The basic issue, underlying this second objection, is that literature is ‘play’ meaning. This objection begins with Plato: “We seem, then, so far to be pretty well agreed that the artist knows nothing worth mentioning about the subjects he represents, and that art is a form of play, not to be taken seriously.”²⁸ For Plato, this would be the case for fictional and non-fictional literature alike, as all represent imperfect copies of ideal objects, and so are always removed from reality.

Later literary theory would generally attach this criticism to fictional literature, as a manifestation of human fancy and imagination. However, modern scholars even view non-fiction as infected with imagination. As White writes:

But in general there has been a reluctance to consider historical narratives as what they most manifestly are: verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much invented as found and the forms of which have more

28 Plato, *Republic*, in *Philosophy of Literature*, trans. Francis Cornford, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 11. For Plato, poetry constitutes an imitation of the real, and thus is secondary in nature: “We may conclude, then, that all poetry . . . consists in representing a semblance of its subject, whatever it may be . . . with no grasp of the reality” (Ibid.).

in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences.²⁹

In this way, non-fiction is never fully non-fictional. As White cleverly summarizes: "If there is an element of the historical in all poetry, there is an element of poetry in every historical account of the world."³⁰ Thus, the suggestion that narratives create 'non-serious' meaning, risks being applied to all narratives, including biblical narratives, ranging from those purporting to be history (Joshua, Acts) to those that are—by definition—fictional (parables of Isaiah and Luke).

Now, if narratives only create non-serious meaning, then the meanings projected by the narrative are not expected to have any significant impact upon the reader's life, so that the notion of ethical responsibility becomes a rather hollow concept. If a racist narrative (Nazi literature) does not affect the reader's thinking and behavior, then does its ethical stance really matter? On the other hand, we might ask if literature is designed to have effects on readers. The *Parable of the Sower* seems designed to change the reader's views. Indeed, it is given an allegorical attachment about growth and destruction in one's life, as a kind of warning about certain types of lifestyles. To address these issues, we turn to examine how a fictional narrative, as a key example of 'non-serious' meaning, is engaged by the reader.

Reading a fictional narrative creates an event which is experienced in the story-world. Readers construct the story-world world as an extension of their 'real' world, by using their existing world as a template upon which the fictional

29 Hayden White, "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1713. White explains: "Yet, I would argue, histories gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of mere chronicles..." (Ibid., 1714). Kalle Pihlainen summarizes White's attachments to both objectivity and subjectivity: "Yet White has... consistently held to the view that there are objective criteria for the assessment of a narrative history... It is only after these criteria fail in deciding between competing interpretations that the consequences of the narrative come into play" ("Narrative Objectivity Versus Fiction," *Rethinking History* 2, no. 1 [1998]: 18).

30 White, "The Historical Text," 1727. Conversely, cf. Richard Walsh on the non-fictionality of fiction: "Fictions are often not entirely fictional, and in principle may not be fictional at all... the distinction is categorical, not because there are any defining attributes inherent to either, but because the interpretative operations applicable to a narrative text are globally transformed, one way or the other, by the extrinsic matter of the discursive frame within which it is received" ("Fictionality and Mimesis: Between Narrativity and Fictional Worlds," *Narrative* 11, no. 1 [Jan 2003]: 115).

world is constructed.³¹ When the text states: “John drove to town,” the modern reader builds this on his existing world, and imagines John in a car . . . and not on a broomstick or a magic elephant. The reader fills in the gaps of the text with objects, colors, smells, and emotions from his ‘real’ world. Because of this process, the narrative world begins to look, smell, and feel like his ‘real’ world. So Ryan writes:

The interpretation of fictional events is a natural process because we interpret them through roughly the same mental operations we would resort to if they happened spontaneously in real life, rather than being made up by an author.³²

Further, the structure of the narrative event mimics the structure of events in the reader’s ‘real’ world: it occurs in a temporal matrix, with a causal structure, and as a series of happenings that produce actual changes in the story-world.³³ A narrative event is constructed as a mimesis of the event-structure found in ‘real’ world events. Indeed, this constructed world is even inhabited by one object from the ‘real’ world: the reader finds that he or she has entered the narrative world and is experiencing the events. When readers bond to a character, they may even take that character’s place in the narrative. As Konigsberg notes:

When reading novels, however, because the character is literally created within us, because his thoughts project themselves into our own, the identification takes possession of us and must be seen as one of introjections.³⁴

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- 31 This is the position of “actualism” in possible worlds theory (cf. Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], 21–24). In brief, my view is that the story-world created by the narrative is an actual world, but doesn’t obtain. It is a non-real world, formed in a space that is connected to the real world through the combined use of mimesis and extension. For further specifics on how this non-real world functions, see Chapter 8, fn. 39.
 - 32 Marie-Laure Ryan, “Meaning, Intent, and the Implied Author,” *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 38, accessed May 13, 2014, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.
 - 33 These aspects of ‘event’ are adapted from David Herman, “Events and Event-Types,” in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 151–152.
 - 34 Ira Konigsberg, *Narrative Technique in the English Novel* (Hamden: Archon Book, 1985), 3–4. Cf. M. Gregory on *Moby Dick*: “Imagine your name to be Ishmael and it will be about you, this story. You will learn to see the world through my eyes, to feel the world through my nerve endings. During the time we spend together you will learn to live as if my heart

For readers, these processes create an 'intuition of actuality' for that world . . . at least during the time of reading. One might say that readers grant the narrative world *the ontological status of a temporary actual world*, which they withdraw at the termination of reading. This is especially visible when an emotional bond is formed between some character and the reader, which explains the powerful reactions that readers experience at, say, the death of that character. Indeed, readers have been known to act upon fictional accounts. So Garber notes that some historical audiences, watching the play *Othello*, have "risen from their seats and shouted the truth at an unhearing Othello, that Desdemona is chaste, that Iago is his enemy, not his friend."³⁵ Similarly, R. Mansfield was so effective as an actor that he was accused of being Jack the Ripper.³⁶ Then, of course, there is the most famous case, where a radio performance of the *War of the Worlds* caused people to leave their homes and shoot their local water towers. In short, narrative events take on the shape of genuine events, which readers both inhabit and experience, and so create the possibility of serious meaning.

Because narratives are experienced as serious events, they impact upon the reader. This is not to say that the reader uncritically accepts any meaning constructed from the text, but rather that there is a shaping potential in all narrative events, *just as there is with events in the reader's real world*. The reader may attach cognitive labels of 'fiction' and 'non-real' to the meaning of the text, but the experience of these events still occurs, and this leaves emotional and cognitive residues. As Gregory writes:

No matter how slightly, we will have become someone different from who we were before because we will have enlarged our capacity for thinking some thoughts we would not have thought in just this way, for feeling some emotions we would not have experienced in just this way . . .³⁷

beat in your chest, as if your ears answered to my name" ("Ethical Criticism: What It Is and Why It Matters," *Style* 32, no. 2 [Summer 1998]: 194, accessed Aug. 8, 2013, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost).

35 Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 603.

36 Jenny Davidson, introduction to *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Stories*, by Robert Stevenson (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2003), xv. This author also cites Paul Wiltach, who details the effects on the audience after seeing the play: "Strongmen shuddered and women fainted and were carried out of the theatre . . . People want away from 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' afraid to enter their houses alone. They feared to sleep in darkened rooms. They were awakened by nightmare" (Ibid., XIII).

37 Marshall Gregory, "Redefining Ethical Criticism," *Journal of Literary Theory* 4, no. 2 (Dec., 2010): 294, accessed May 30, 2014, Humanities International Compete, EBSCOhost. Ethical criticism is based on a "strong connection between art and life," as art provides "surrogate

Davis graphically illustrates the resulting effects:

My very sense of myself comes out of the pages of novels as much as it comes out of the working-class apartment in the Bronx where I attained consciousness... My notions of beauty, truth, and reality peel off the pages of these works. I am the perfect prisoner of the novel.³⁸

However, just herein lies the problem: serious meaning may not only aid in the development of the self, but also in the deformation of the self (no matter how the self is defined). For example, imagine that one's 8 year old daughter comes home with a series of formulaic romantic novels in which the woman is always subservient to the man. Because an 8 year old lacks sufficient self-hood in the area of gender identity, she risks a non-critical assimilation of the role posed by the novel. The role will appear 'natural' and 'right' within that narrative world, and will be validated by the events within the narrative itself. The granting of temporary ontological status, along with the attendant experiencing of emotions and validation within the narrative's events, are powerful shaping forces. For this reason, Feminist, Womanist, African-American, and Marxist Criticism acknowledge that narratives construct serious ideological meaning *which is deforming of the reader*, and so posit resistant readings to counteract its hegemony.

This brings us back to ethics and ethical criticism. Ethical criticism recognizes that authors are not solely word-smiths, as if they only created word sequences without meaning, or as if only the literary form counted, but not the meaning.³⁹ Ethical criticism takes the communicative chain, from author through intermediates to reader, seriously. The parables are not simply snip-

experiences" for the reader (Daniel Schwarz, "A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," in *Mapping the Ethical Turn*, ed. Todd Davis and Kenneth Womack [Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001], 5), and so function as a shaping force on the reader from infant to adulthood. Similarly Martha Nussbaum, "Exactly and Responsibly: A Defense of Ethical Criticism," *Philosophy and Literature* 22, no. 2 (1998): 350, 356.

38 Lennard Davis, *Resisting Novels* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 1–2; cf. 9–10. Similarly, Ricoeur talks about the "fragility" of the self when encountering the other (Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004], 81).

39 For example, Schwarz suggests that "the focus on formalism caused critics in the several decades following publication (of Eliot's "Geration") to ignore the inflammatory nature of this (anti-Semitic) image" ("A Humanistic Ethics of Reading," 7; first parenthesis is the author's, second parentheses is mine). Similarly Wayne Booth: "Defenders of ethical and other ideological criticism have rightly deplored the temptation . . . to ignore the real ethi-

pets of aesthetic beauty, but impact upon readers, changing their grasp of religion and life. Because narrative events are constituted as serious event, they not only affect the readers, but even risk refiguring them (Ricoeur's term for 'mimesis3'). If this happens to any degree, then the author cannot absolve herself of ethical responsibility by appealing to: 'That's only the way you interpret the text,' or 'Fiction is only play meaning,' or even 'Art for art's sake.' Authors retain partial responsibility for the intentional objects created from the text, that is, from its purposeful designs.

Of course, this requires both that the reader is able to recognize and follow those designs in the text, and that the reader be passive in the reception of such meaning. This is not possible, as the reader participates in the reading process, functioning as a co-creator in the event itself (he must at the very least fill in the 'gaps' of the event). For this reason, the responsibility is partially shared by the reader. Indeed, in those cases where the reader deliberately changes the textual design (a resistant reading, playing with the text), the author bears even less responsibility for what is created. But to the degree that communication is able to occur (addressed in Chapter 6), the author cannot act as if her voice has no effect in the world. To separate the author from the text is to deny this responsibility, *which is little more than saying that the person behind these acts has no voice in the world, no shaping power over the world, and no significance for the reader.* Readers know better.

The Private Language Problem

An autonomy that excludes all connections to the author, forces readers to take responsibility for the *selection of the language used* in reading. Since readers not bound by the author's time or culture, they are free to invoke any language conventions that they wish. They need not read by the conventions of the author, the intended audience, or their own culture. They could even choose to vary the language conventions across the reading of the text. So Kincaid states that the text is "dots on a page," and that interpretation is "the forceful application of interpretive codes that are entirely contingent, determined not by the dots but by professional, historical, cultural accident . . ."40 This gives considerable freedom to the reader, who plunges into the text with unfettered hands.

However, such a position also means that there are no criteria for language usage, and this brings us to Wittgenstein's private language argument.

cal and political effects of even the purest artistic form" (*The Company We Keep* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 7).

40 James Kincaid and James Phelan, "What Do We Owe Texts: Respect, Irreverence or Nothing at All," in *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1999): 761–762.

Wittgenstein was concerned about the issue of 'private' sensations, such as pain. If these sensations were wholly private, that is, without attached behaviors, then no rule could be devised for connecting the word 'pain' to the inner sensation.⁴¹ It would be impossible to tell if one person used 'pain' for the same sensation as any other person. One person might call 'pain' what another calls 'salty.' In other words, a private language has no intersubjective criterion for its use of words, so that these words do not function in communication.

Wittgenstein's understanding of privacy applies to the situation at hand. Since readers are not bound by the author's language conventions, they may apply any conventions they so desire. They might read some New Testament sentences with the word usage and grammar of Classical Greek, but the next with *Koinē*, and yet others with Modern Greek. For this reader, there is no criterion for the text's words or grammar. The reader's use of language has receded into a private language, which, according to Wittgenstein, is no language at all . . . or at least a language that can do no communicative work.⁴² In this situation, the author's subjectivity, as reproduced in the text, has been compromised and her voice has been silenced.

At this point the literary theorist may step in, and suggest that aesthetic language is not for the purpose of communication, so that our point is without merit. In doing so, she is suggesting that aesthetic language is ontologically different from ordinary language. She is making the case that the former functions to give aesthetic pleasure while the latter functions in communication. We will address this 'two-language' argument in Section 3, but suffice it to say here that the two cannot be cleanly separated, so that the distinction is arbitrary and fails to nullify our objection.

41 When Wittgenstein uses 'private,' he means 'in' the mind, and without external expression. He writes: "What would it be like if human being shewed no outward signs of pain (did not groan, grimace, etc.)? Then it would be impossible to teach a child the use of the word 'tooth-ache'" (Wittgenstein, *The Wittgenstein Reader*, 147). Cf. John Cook, "Wittgenstein on Privacy," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 515.

42 One way around the private language issue is by extending Davidson's "passing theory of language," which views language as non-conventional in nature; cf. David Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 482. However Davidson fails to address how the ability to recognize a malapropism requires a shared, convention-ridden language where a particular word is expected, but a similar sounding one supplied.

The Problem of Alienated Labor

A system that detaches the author from her text results in a separation of the worker from her labor, that is, from her text. The worker puts time and creative energy into her work, attempting to reproduce, among other things, her subjectivity in the text. As Marx once quipped: "The worker puts his life into the object . . ."⁴³ By separating the author from her text, readers have alienated the worker from her work, and this engages Marx's critique of alienated labor.

For Marx, humans have the intrinsic need to engage in productive labor, and so labor is viewed as the appropriate expression of one's character. In productive labor, humans reproduce themselves in their works. Marx writes that the worker "duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created."⁴⁴ However, the worker may lose control over her work. In the factory system, the product never belongs to the worker. The product, in which the worker has reproduced herself, is lost to the worker, and now confronts her as a loss of self. Marx writes: "In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labour therefore tears away from him his species-life . . ."⁴⁵

The case is similar for the author and her text. When the author reproduces her subjectivity in the text, she has engaged in productive activity as an appropriate expression of her 'self' (even though this occurs through the intermediary of the implied authorA). When this author contemplates the world about her, she finds: her text, her voice instantiated in the text, and her voice speaking out to the reader. The author may sell her work to a publisher, but she still maintains a connection to her work through the notion of authorship (no one assumes that the publishing house wrote the text), which is formally encoded in copyright laws. The publisher/editor cannot undo her work by forcibly rearranging sentences or excising paragraphs.

However, when the text goes out to the reader, the control and use of that manuscript are in the reader's hands. Readers may choose to read with the conventions of a different culture or cut out sections for their own purposes. The Jefferson Bible is a clear example, where the miracle stories were excised so that the original 'voice of the author' was replaced by the 'voice of the Enlightenment.' In such cases, readers assume a coercive power over the text, which is now treated as an 'It' suitable for manipulation. The text no longer functions as the author's voice in the world, but through the reader's

43 Karl Marx, "Estranged Labour (1844)," in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 440.

44 Ibid., 444.

45 Ibid.

manipulation 'says' things that are foreign to the author. As Marx writes, the product "becomes a power of its own confronting him; it means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien."⁴⁶

Let us return to the reader of the *Parable of the Good Samaritan*. In Chapter 1, we posited a reader who assumed the point of view (conceptual and interest point of view) of the bandit. This reader might proclaim that the parable means: "It is acceptable to rob people, as God will send a Samaritan to help." Given the broader context of Luke, it is clear that the author (the implied authorA) would find this meaning a manipulation of her voice: she encounters it as something "hostile and alien." The author has become alienated from her own labor. Her voice has been turned into the pawn of the more powerful reader, and she has been rendered 'voiceless.'

The Problem of Monological Truth

A system that excludes all access to the author, also excludes the author from any dialogue over how the text is read or the meaning of the text. This brings us to the question: *who formulates the meaning of a text in an authoritative way for the reader?* There are two general possibilities. The first is for the reader to accept the meaning of some authority, such as the author's comments, a particular interpreter's views, or his own construction of meaning. While these methods appear diverse, all are oriented around a single person or single ideological group, which acts as the authority 'over' the meaning of the text. The second is for the reader to participate in a broader dialogue, where the members are from diverse perspectives. Let us begin with a critique of the first.

In the past, the author was afforded the position of absolute authority over the text's meaning. Mitchell calls this the "tyranny of authors . . . to dictate and foreclose the meaning-possibilities of the text . . ."⁴⁷ In present literary circles, the author has been dethroned, and the readers raised to prominence. Now the readers act as the authority over the text, treating it as an object which they master, control, and manipulate according to their own desires and interests. As Maynard summarizes: ". . . the final authority is the individual reader who reads for her own interests and needs."⁴⁸ In this system, neither the author nor any other interpreters have a voice. The reader stands unfettered.

46 Ibid., 440.

47 Mitchell, *Intention and Text*, 53.

48 John Maynard, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009), 364.

Such readers generally assume that they are creating their own meaning, uninfluenced by others, in their own private world. This is tied to the assumption that they are able to create their own reading experience, free from external influences or coercion. The reader simply assigns his own meanings to the linguistic and literary structures, as if they were simple objects in his personal world. As this 'personal world' seems natural and reasonable, the reader assumes that his reading of the text is also natural and reasonable.

But the reader's world is not wholly, or even mostly, private. Most of it was constructed by the surrounding culture and language, so that the notions of 'natural' and 'reasonable' are generally an illusion. We can examine this under the twin categories of language and method. Readers use language to read the text. The language conventions that they use may appear natural and neutral, but historical groups within society created those conventions, and their ideologies lay hidden behind them.⁴⁹ Language itself is the result of a prior consensus, and that consensus leaves an ideological residue within language. So, for example, God is usually identified with masculine pronouns, almost as if to say that this were a characteristic of God. Thus, interpreters use language that has already manipulated them, treating them as an object and contaminating their interpretative efforts.

The case is similar with 'method.' All readers use some method to read the text. Every method is based on grounding assumptions. These assumptions govern what readers are able to see in the text, so that the text is always forced into categories created by those assumptions (method-based meaning). As Fish writes: "I did what critics always do: I 'saw' what my interpretive principles permitted or directed me to see, and then I turned around and attributed what I had 'seen' to a text and an intention."⁵⁰ Interpreters utilize a method that has already manipulated what they can see, treating them as an object and contaminating their interpretive efforts.

49 Jürgen Habermas writes: "Rational reconstruction of a linguistic rule system, on the other hand, serves to define linguistic competence. It makes rules explicit of which the native speaker has an implicit command; but it does not, properly speaking, make the speaker aware of unconscious presuppositions" ("On Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer [New York: Continuum, 1985], 298; cf. 317). Similarly M.M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 291.

50 Stanley Fish, "Interpreting the Variorum," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 176.

Thus, the reader is never unfettered, and has no 'natural' reading. The notion of a reader's 'private world' is a myth... an illusion created by the presence of one's self as the only physical being present, while failing to recognize the myriad of voices that whisper in the background. Readers are already bound by their language and method, and so biased by background elements that reproduce themselves in every interpretation. Thus, *monologic readings have no adequate structure for the categories of 'the meaning of the text' or 'the voice of the author.'*

Because of these problems, Habermas suggests a different way forward. He suggests using an intersubjective dialogue, which brings us to that second way of formulating meaning. Here meaning is not formulated by one person or a single ideologically constructed community, but by a diverse group—including the author—who have an interest in the text.

According to Habermas, there are four key notions to this way of forming meaning. First, the group begins with a suspicion that language and method are systematically deformed by ideology, and so engages in discussion to expose and remedy these distortions. This is underlain by the conviction that the larger group has the resources—various perspectives—to recognize distortions, and so to engage in reasoned discussion over each.

Second, the group creates an environment that fosters genuine dialogue, where every participant is "allowed to question any assertion whatever...allowed to introduce any assertion whatever...allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs."⁵¹ Without this, the topics and responses are selected and screened by a prior authority, and so controlled by that person's interests.

Third, language is used for communication with others-as-subjects, and not for manipulation of others-as-objects.⁵² When this is ignored, the dialogue space becomes riddled by the interests of the dominant voices, who use language strategically to control the discussion and its ends. This results in a type of pseudo-communication that masquerades as genuine communication.

51 Jürgen Habermas, "Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification," in *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Sheirry Nicholsen (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), 89.

52 The notion of reciprocal relations between subjects forms the groundwork for Habermas' communicative reason. Cf. Stephen White, *The Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 56.

Finally, the group is oriented by the desire of finding consensus, by using reasoned discussion to evaluate each perspective.⁵³ As Habermas summarizes, truth “can be guaranteed only by that consensus which might be reached under the idealized conditions to be found in unrestrained and dominance-free communication.”⁵⁴ While the consensus may only occur at some level of abstraction, the payoff is that *this consensus has a greater chance of recognizing and eliminating ideological distortions than any single person's attempt.*⁵⁵

Thus, when the reader acts as the sole authority over the text (a textual autonomy that excludes not only the author, but even readers from other ideological stances), he approaches the text as if it were an object in a subject-object relationship. Authorial interests are ignored, so that the reader is free to seek his own interests, both in how reading occurs and in the kind of meaning so created. However, such readers remain blind to their own status as an object of language and culture, so that the ‘voice’ they create is already ideologically distorted. The structures of communication are compromised. Such readers have become the unwitting pawns of language and method, creating meanings that they imagine are free of distortion . . . while the genuine ‘subjects’ are winking in the background.

Marginalization and the Ethics of Dialogue

While the notion of a broader dialogue makes sense, the critic might stop and ask: “But do we need to include the author in this process? Cannot the author

53 Of course, this means that the consensus is grounded in some grasp of the consensus-forming processes, and this is located in reason/rationality itself. So Habermas is often claimed to have ‘rehabilitated’ reason. Habermas’ example is that a group can come to some consensus over the ‘truth’ that drinking water may/may not be found in some location. Similarly, the group can certainly come to consensus over which alphabet is used in a text. Only at higher levels of complexity does the discussion become more interesting.

54 Habermas, “On Hermeneutics’ Claim,” 314. Later Habermas writes: “This concept of communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld” (Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy [Boston: Beacon Press, 1984], 1.10).

55 This discussion is not suggesting that the reader become “neutral,” but only that the reader needs to recognize his own assumptions in reading, and in particular, the influences of his culture. We will later suggest that the reader replace these biases/beliefs with those of the intended audience, so that these are now his reading biases.

be excluded from the broader dialogue, especially as the author is physically absent (actual author) and theoretically absent (implied authorA)?" After all, an abundance of groups are already at the discussion table.

This brings us to another element of Habermas' discourse ethics. As noted above, Habermas uses certain principles to create a space for "unrestrained and dominance-free communication." These principles are founded on a notion of reciprocity among participants-as-subjects. However, a further note needs to be made about the composition of the group. Here Habermas states: "Each subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse."⁵⁶ Without this principle, the discussion space is underlain by selection criteria which form a membership bias. Such a criterion is based on someone's interests, so that the exclusion stems from a prior ideological stance and creates ideological boundaries for the discussion space. In such a situation, as Foucault has observed, truth is tied to "systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it."⁵⁷ This 'selection bias' both controls and limits the discussion.

Further, the exclusion of the author suggests the process of marginalization. The author/implied authorA, as the least powerful person by virtue of absence, is pushed to the margins: her voice is not allowed to count for much. This implies that the author is, at best, a subject of insufficient value to be engaged. The author is refused the status of a 'Thou' with a voice . . . or at least without a voice that counts.

But it is worse than simple marginalization, where some notion of authorial value—however compromised—still remains. The wholesale exclusion of the author suggests the process of objectification. For Habermas, when one person acts as the authority over another, he or she is treating the other as an object. In such relations, the authority is the subject who masters, controls, and manipulates the other. Subject/object types of communication utilize the strategic function of language, where the authority uses rhetorical elements to secure his or her own interests, without regard to the interests of the other (who is only an object). To use the language of Hegel, the master "negates the other."

Thus, when readers treat the text as an autonomous object, they refuse to recognize the author's interests, either in how the text is read or in the meaning so derived. Such readers secure their own interests through the selection of a reading method (method-based meaning) that is designed to produce the object of their own desires (desire-based meaning). Their relation to the text

56 Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 89.

57 Michel Foucault, "From *Truth and Power*," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1669.

is a strategic one, where they treat the text as an object in the satisfaction of their own desires. In short, this issue is not about 'how' or 'to what degree' the author's interests can be accounted for, but only that they are irrelevant in the first place. Carroll nicely summarizes: "The idea of maximization of aesthetic satisfaction has a very 'consumerist' ring to it. In Buber-esque lingo, it reduces our relation to the text to an I/It relationship."⁵⁸

For these several reasons, the discussion of this exclusive group is suspect prior to the discussion even beginning. The author, as a person with a vested interest in the text, deserves a place at the discussion table. This does not mean that the author claims absolute privilege, as in prior ages, but only that she deserves to be heard. As Salkeld has suggested: "Readers' cognitions hold no ontological priority over those of authors..."⁵⁹ Or, as Eco writes about his own novels: "As an uncommitted reader, however, I think I have a right to state my opinion."⁶⁰

Reciprocity and the Social Contract

An interpretive system that separates an author from her work, suggests a problem in the very notion of communication. Communication occurs, at least in part, because the participants implicitly agree to use the same set of language conventions.⁶¹ Shared conventions are the basis of public language, which serve the human interest in genuine communication, and which likely arose

58 Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," 118.

59 Salkeld, "Shakespeare and 'the I-word,'" 329. Earlier he writes: "Yet what principle or 'theory' could possibly rule out talk of authorial intention at all times and in all places?" (Ibid., 328).

60 Umberto Eco, "Between Author and Text," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 77. William Nelles suggests the author's role here: "The point is that the author's critique of his own work is not necessarily to be privileged over that of other critics... Some *authors* are very good readers of their own works, while others are not" ("Historical and Implied Authors and Readers," *Comparative Literature*, 45, no. 1 [Winter 1993]: 36).

61 On the notion of language as shared conventions, see John Searle, "Literary Theory and Its Discontents," *New Literary History* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1994), and David Lewis, "Languages and Language," in *The Philosophy of Language* 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). For Davidson's rejection of language conventions, see Chapter 7. However even Davidson notes: "The writer, however, cannot ignore what his readers know or assume about the words he uses, and such knowledge and expectations can come only from the reader's exposure to past usage" (David Davidson, "James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty," in *Truth, Language, and History* [Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005], 147).

because of its survival value in coordinating human activity.⁶² The adherence to these conventions is underlain by an implicit social contract, whereby each participant agrees to use the same language conventions. As Lewis notes: “We have coordination between truthful speaker and trusting hearer . . . because he expects complementary conformity on the part of the other.”⁶³ The contract is implicit in that readers tend not to think about these language choices, but the deliberate nature of the choice can be seen when the receiver must be explicit. Consider the example of translating a New Testament text, where the translator must decide which form of Greek to use, or of a conversation between people using different dialects of the same language.

As this is an implicit contract, consent is not mandatory. The hearer is not required to utilize the language conventions of the speaker. Similarly, readers are not bound to read the text by the language conventions that the author desired, i.e., those of the intended audience. There are no formal rules governing the relationships between authors and readers, so that neither has a ‘coercive power’ over the other. The relationship between author and reader is voluntary (except in legal disputes over, say, the terms of a contract or a will). Because of this, each has an equal opportunity to mis-read the other’s text, in service to his or her own interests and power. This kind of relationship was examined by Thomas Hobbs in his discussion of social contract theory.

Hobbs begins by noting that, in some respects, people possess a relative equality to each other. He writes:

62 Cf. Kirsten Malmkjær, “Origin of language,” in *The Linguistics Encyclopedia*, ed. Kirsten Malmkjær (London: Routledge, 1991), 327. On the “coordination problem,” cf. Anita Avramides, “Intention and Convention,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright (Malden: Blackwell, 1997), 81.

63 Lewis, *Languages and language*, 565. Others have also noted the contract like nature of the relation: “The rules, in other words, serve as a kind of assumed contract between author and reader—they specify the grounds on which the intended reading should take place” (Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* [Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987], 43); “The moment the readers accept the invitation (to read a work of fiction), they enter into an unpronounced contract with the author (to read the work as fiction)” (Petri Merenlahti and Raimo Hakola, “Reconceiving Narrative Criticism,” in *Characterization in the Gospels*, ed. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999], 35); “A novel, even a realist novel, is something other (th)an a history book. They are distinguished from each other by the nature of the implicit contract between the writer and the reader. Even when not clearly stated, this contract sets up different expectations on the side of the reader and different promises on that of the author (Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 261).

Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of the body, and mind; as that though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind than another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable . . .⁶⁴

From here Hobbs notes that people have desires, and they manipulate their culture's systems to meet these. As each is trying to meet his own desires, but never able to conquer the 'others' because of their relative equality, there is perpetual conflict. This makes all people dangerous to all others. Thus arises the need for an explicit social contract between participants. Kymlicka summarizes:

However, while there is nothing inherently wrong in harming you, I would be better off refraining from doing so if every other person refrains from harming me. Such a convention against injury is mutually advantageous.⁶⁵

The case is similar with communication. It is to the mutual advantage of speaker and hearer to coordinate their activity through genuine communication, and this can only occur when both choose the same general set of language conventions. For example, I could choose to listen to my neighbor by decoding her speech with 17th century language conventions. She could then choose to decode my response with a mixture of 12th and 21st century language conventions. In such a situation, the speaker is unable to state that anyone has misunderstood her work, *for there is no agreement on the public language that undergirds the communicative effort*.⁶⁶ Once the 'author—text' relation is severed from the 'reader—text' relation, the reader is under no obligation to use the author's language conventions. Such might allow the reader to generate new and exciting meanings, and even meanings that are highly relevant to his situation, but they do so at the expense of the communicative effort: the

64 Thomas Hobbs, "Leviathan," in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 207. Hobbs' assumptions better fit the author/interpreter relationship than the assumption of inequality, as in Locke, Rousseau, and Rawls. However, an application of either type results in similar effects, i.e., treating the other with some form of respect. For an application of Rawls, see Chapter 8.

65 Will Kymlicka, "The Social Contract Tradition," in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1993), 189.

66 This is a return to Wittgenstein's notion of a "private language."

author's voice is silenced. In the words of Hobbs: "For as long as every man holdeth this right, of doing any thing he liketh; so long are all men in the condition of war."⁶⁷

At this point the literary theorist might step in with two objections. First, she might suggest that, as the author is not physically present, the implicit social contract is defunct. After all, Paul cannot object to how I read *Romans*. But does the absence of an author, either because she lives in a different city or is long dead, modify the principles of ethics? Consider a professor who receives essays from two students. Before he grades these, however, one of the students is killed in a traffic accident. The professor grades the alive student's essay by the shared conventions of 'the college essay.' But does the professor have the right to grade the dead student's essay by the conventions of a Shakespearean sonnet, and so give her an *in absentia* 'F'? Or consider the successive distancing of the speaker, from being in a conversation (physically and temporally present), to using a telephone (spatially absent but temporal present), to using a mailed letter (partial spatially and temporal absent), to having her will activated at her death (completely spatially and temporally absent). At what point are ethical principles no longer relevant? Our conclusion is that the ethics of communication is not tied to the physical presence or absence of a person. The contract remains in place.

Second, the theorist might suggest that aesthetic language is not for the purpose of communication in the first place. In doing so, she is suggesting that aesthetic language is ontologically different from ordinary language. We will address this in detail below, but suffice it to note that no clear distinction can be made, so that this argument fails to nullify our objection.

Summary

In this section, we have examined the consequences of separating an author from her text. This separation removes all ethical responsibility from the author, and so neutralizes the influence of her voice. It turns the text into a private language, so that no communication occurs. It separates that author from her own labor, so that the author loses her voice in the world. It turns the text into an object for manipulation, and not a subject for ongoing dialogue. It marginalizes the author, excluding her from the discussion of her own work. It creates a selection bias over any discussion about the text, and so conforms the conclusions to the ideological interest of the powerful. Finally, it ignores the public nature of communication, as occurring under an implicit social contract. These various arguments suggest serious ontological, epistemologi-

67 Hobbs, "Leviathan," 210 (italics mine).

cal, and ethical problems attendant to the use of textual autonomy, and so for any interpretive system founded upon it.

However, those who hold to textual autonomy have a major counterargument. This is the suggestion that our discussion has confused aesthetic language with ordinary language. If this argument succeeds, then most of our objections are skirted around. To this argument we now turn.

Section 3: An Attempted Resolution: The 'Two-Language' Option

The most common way to resolve our objections is to suggest that language is more complicated than originally anticipated. It may be that 'language' is actually 'languages,' and that our discussion has confused 'ordinary language' with 'aesthetic language.' Perhaps ordinary language serves the interests of communication, while literary language serves the interests of aesthetic pleasure. As in Kant, aesthetic objects do not form concepts. Since the purpose of aesthetic language is pleasure, readers need no connection between the author and text, nor do they need to hear the author's voice.⁶⁸ Those are only important in communication. Indeed, some readers consider these connections to be a hindrance, as they get in the way of maximizing aesthetic pleasure. The text does not need to be read in any particular public language or cultural institutions, but by whatever means allows for the maximizing of pleasure . . . as each culture grasps 'pleasure.'

There are two underlying assumptions in this option. The first is that the reader's primary interest is aesthetic pleasure. Carroll attacks this as "a species of aesthetic hedonism," with a distinctly "consumerist" flavor.⁶⁹ But not all reading occurs under the drive for pleasure, and not all readers have purely hedonist intentions. The desire for aesthetic pleasure is located in a particular interpretive community(s). It cannot be universalized, and neither can a methodology based upon it. There are many types of readerly desire, and each spawns a different interpretive path.

The second issue deals with the nature and function of 'aesthetic language.' This story begins with Kant, who posited beauty as a subjective category that does not involve concepts. For Kant, pure beauty is an end in itself. It does not have instrumental purpose: it is not a means towards other ends, such as

68 Note that Kant would not agree with this formulation, as pleasure is based on an interest, and so doesn't fit under "pure beauty." See below on "disinterested pleasure."

69 Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation," 122, 118. Similarly Nussbaum, "Exactly and Responsibly," 360.

teaching a lesson, conforming to aesthetic standards, or selling real estate. Zima summarizes:

This attitude (towards the beautiful) not only excludes conceptual definitions but also all attempts to instrumentalise the Beautiful, reducing it to what is economically, politically or didactically useful ... Kant expects the competent or ideal observer to regard aesthetic objects with *disinterested pleasure* ... and conceive of them as *purposiveness without purpose* ... they ought to be considered as *autonomous* with respect to economic, political or affective interests.⁷⁰

As discussed earlier, Kant's 'beauty' is not about concepts or information, but would be like observing a flower, enjoying the beauty as an end in itself, with no purpose, concept, goal, standard, or use in mind. These threads were picked up by many of the modern literary schools, which began to separate aesthetic language from ordinary language on the basis of form and function. Such was especially well developed by the Romantics and New Critics, as a means of stopping the Positivist attack on poetry as false, derivative, and ornamental.⁷¹

In the following discussion, we will focus on one of the most influential proponents of these notions, Monroe Beardsley, a New Literary critic. His example of ordinary language is a love letter (however counterintuitive this may seem). According to Beardsley, such a letter is primarily about information, so that the author's intention takes precedence:

If there is ambiguity or the possibility of misspeaking, we want to correct it. To do this, we may avail ourselves of such evidence as fuller explanations by the author himself, if we can find him, and information about his actions.⁷²

On the other hand, aesthetic language is for the purpose of pleasure: the reader reads a novel for pleasure, not for information.

But how does one separate out these two languages, so as to identify a love letter as 'ordinary language' and a novel as 'aesthetic language?' After all, both

70 Zima, *The Philosophy of Modern Literary Theory*, 4; author's italics. Kant writes about free beauty: "There is presupposed no concept of any purpose which the manifold of the given object is to serve, and which therefore is to be represented in it" (*Critique of Judgment*, 66).

71 Cf. M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 298–333.

72 Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," 33.

use the same words and grammar. Literary theorists have posed a variety of differences, and to these we now turn.

Emergentism

Some theorists suggest that new types of entities emerge in the reading of aesthetic language, and this process (called 'emergentism') marks a difference from ordinary language. This is similar to the concept of supervenience (Chapter 3), where a collection of compositing units results in the emergence of new properties that are not found in the original units. In this argument, aesthetic language produces a new kind of object, and this object is not reducible to the words and grammar of the text, or to propositional concepts. Beardsley writes in this vein:

Now the goodness in which we take an interest (when our interest is aesthetic) is something that arises out of the ingredients of the poem itself: the ways its verbal parts—its structure and texture—combine and cooperate to make something fresh and novel emerge. The words have to work on us. They work by manipulating our understanding of parts to make us experience a whole that contains something not in the parts.⁷³

But is this property unique to aesthetic language? Ricoeur has suggested a similar process at the level of the sentence. He notes that a sentence is composed of a noun (an identifying word) and a verb (a predicating word), and when these are placed together, a new whole emerges with properties that are not found in the original units. He summarizes:

The sentence is not a larger or more complex word. It is a new entity. It may be decomposed into words, but the words are something other than short sentences. A sentence is a whole irreducible to the sum of its parts.⁷⁴

This emergentism occurs whether the sentence is used in literary or ordinary sentences. At a more complex level, a narrative is composed of sentences containing elements of character description and plot. Together they produce a story, with the emergent properties of 'event.' But this is not unique to literary

73 Ibid., 34; author's parenthesis. Also cf. Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen, "The Philosophy of Literature: Pleasure Restored," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 206.

74 Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 7.

narratives. The emergence of 'event' occurs in non-aesthetic forms, such as historical narratives, narrative jokes, and even common gossip.

Indeed, examples of emergentism continue to occur at higher levels of complexity, such as genre. Consider the example of a person saying: "And because President Bush threw all our money at Iraq . . . I'm going to get him!" This is something that Jay Leno might say in a jocular voice, a terrorist might shout as part of a political speech, or a novelist might include as part of a thriller. The same statement means different things in different genres, because different qualities emerge when the same sentence is combined with different genre markers. Thus, emergentism is not unique to aesthetic language, and so fails as a distinguishing characteristic.

Pretend Speech Acts

Some authors suggest that aesthetic language uses a different type of speech act. Ordinary language utilizes speech acts where the speaker's language functions to 'do and say' something. For example, when an official takes the oath of office, the language functions to install the person into that office, with its rights and privileges. However, Beardsley argues that in literary texts, speech acts are imitations, and so do not function in the same way. He views them as 'pretend speech acts' that lack the illocutionary force of regular speech acts.

Beardsley offers the example of an actor, who states: "I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States."⁷⁵ This is clearly a pretend speech act, in that the actor's repetition of the oath does not make him president, nor does he expect it to have. It is a representation or imitation of a speech act, with no illocutionary force in the 'real' world. In a later essay, Beardsley develops this further, emphasizing that such speech acts bear a "selective similarity" to those in ordinary speech, but are defective in that they are missing essential elements.⁷⁶ In a similar way, Searle states that speech acts in fiction are pretend: "She is pretending, one could say, to make an assertion, or acting as if she were making an assertion, or going through the motions of making an assertion, or imitating the making of an assertion."⁷⁷

75 Monroe Beardsley, "The Concept of Literature," in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 54. Beardsley calls these 'make believe' and an 'imitation of a compound illocutionary act' (Ibid., 55).

76 Monroe Beardsley, "Intentions and Interpretations: A Fallacy Revived," in *The Aesthetic Point of View*, ed. Michael Wreen and Donald Callen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 191.

77 John Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 114. He calls such a "nondeceptive pseudoperformance."

After making this argument, Beardsley points out a problem with his own argument. He notes that some aesthetic forms do use speech acts with illocutionary force.⁷⁸ But instead of scraping this criterion, he restricts it. He suggests that this criterion best applies to fiction or imaginative literature, but that further criteria are needed to address the whole of literature.

However, even this will not do. The issue goes deeper, down to one's understanding of fictional worlds. Beardsley's notion of 'imitation' suggests that, in his thinking, a story-world is grasped as a pretend world, where events do not happen and characters do not exist. For this reason the speech acts cannot have illocutionary effects. This notion goes back to Plato: "...art is a form of play, not to be taken seriously."⁷⁹

However, this is to miss how narrative worlds function. The reader stands in two interconnected worlds. The first is the actual world, in which events happen in a temporal and causal matrix, and in which his own words have illocutionary effects. This is the space inhabited by the 'actual-self'. The second is the narrative world, which, as noted earlier, is a mimetic extension of reader's actual world, and is inhabited by a mimetic extension of actual-self (the 'reading-self').⁸⁰ The story-world is constructed upon and traced through by the reader's grasp of his own 'real' world. When gaps appear in the narrative, the reader fills these with objects from his 'real' world. These create an 'intuition of actuality' for that narrative world, so that the reader grants it the ontological status of a temporary actual world. Of course, when he puts the book down, this intuition and granting of status are revoked, and the actual-self finds itself in the real world that it never left. This explains the truly strange circumstance of how one may weep at the death of Romeo and Juliette (the world of the reading-self), and yet not call for an ambulance (the world of the actual-self).

This suggests that, for the reading-self, the fictional world is an actual world with existing characters... even though it is not the 'real' world of the actual-self.⁸¹ Within that fictional world, a character's speech acts function as those in the real world, and this can be demonstrated by changes in the

78 Beardsley, "The Concept of Literature", 55–56. Beardsley makes a distinction between the 'writing' of a love poem and the 'using' of a love poem. He sees the former as non-illocutionary, but the latter as illocutionary.

79 Plato, *Republic*, 11.

80 I use a "two-self" reading model, where the reading-self is a mimetic extension of the actual-self, but without any executive function (this resides with the actual-self). The reading-self is like the general construct of 'the self' used in counterfactual simulations in order to evaluate contingencies, such as: "What would I do if..."

81 For the specifics on how this occurs, see Chapter 8, fn. 36.

behavior of the various characters. When character 'X' orders character 'Z' to run down the road, character 'Z' does so. This behavior shows that character 'Z' has uptake of the command, and just this validates the reader's intuitions about this world. So Ronen writes that "fictional facts do not relate to what could have or could not have occurred in actuality, but rather, what did occur and what could have occurred in fiction."⁸² In other words, a character's speech in the story-world *has the same illocutionary force, at the behavioral level, as speech acts in the reader's real-world*. If this were not the case, then a character's speech would not carry any force for the other characters, and the reader could not understand how characters respond to each other. For the reading-self who is 'in' the narrative world, there are no pretend or defective speech acts. *Pretend' is, quite simply, the 'outside' evaluation of the actual-self*.

Further, the form of the speech act is identical for each world. While Beardsley suggests that speech acts in literary speech are lacking in constitutive elements, Searle has shown that this is not the case. As Searle writes:

The utterance acts in fiction are indistinguishable from the utterance acts of serious discourse, and it is for that reason that there is no textual property that will identify a stretch of discourse as a work of fiction.⁸³

Our conclusion is that speech acts, in the possible world of the reading-self, are not pretend or defective. Their form and functions are identical to speech acts in the real world. Thus, this criterion fails to distinguish literary language from ordinary language.

Formal Features and Implicit Meaning

A variety of authors suggest that aesthetic language is different in that it contains a greater preponderance, or greater dependence upon, implicit meaning. Implicit meaning is provided by connotation, suggestion, and implication, and is easily recognized in metaphor, irony, verse structure, rhyme, and the like. Here we again turn to Beardsley. He writes that literary language can be characterized by "those discourses a substantial portion of whose meaning is implicit (or secondary) meaning."⁸⁴ Levinson states the case dramatically:

82 Ronen, *Possible Worlds*, 9.

83 Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse," 115. If they were different, then, as Searle notes, words would "not have their normal meanings in works of fiction" (*Ibid.*, 114). Instead, Searle separates the form of the speech act from its function, which—given our discussion of possible world's theory—is unnecessary and just as problematic.

84 Beardsley, "The Concept of Literature," 53.

One difference, it seems to me, between literary and conversational situations is that utterer's meaning is virtually all important in the latter, while the meaning of the vehicle itself, if opposed to the former, counts for virtually nothing.⁸⁵

However, Beardsley also critiques his own criterion. He notes that the amount of implicit meaning is relative, as ordinary speech may also utilize implicit figures. He clarifies the difference under the terms "a greater prevalence" and "a matter of degree."⁸⁶ He also notes borderline examples, such as the poem *The Red Wheelbarrow*, where implicit language is not particularly prominent. Nevertheless, he retains the criterion, placing it in conjunction with his other suggestions.

However, this still will not do. While it is clear that literature uses a greater number of implicit forms, such as metaphor and irony, this fails to address the larger concerns of language itself. Here we return to Nietzsche's grasp of language. He writes that language is thoroughly metaphorical in nature:

We believe that when we speak of trees, colours, snow, and flowers, we have knowledge of the things themselves, and yet we possess only metaphors of things which in no way correspond to the original entities.⁸⁷

His point is that a word does not contain some essence of 'the thing itself,' but is only a metaphor for one's experience of that thing. In a similar way, Gibbs and Wilson examine how bodily experience influences language: "People at the very least tacitly recognize enduring metaphorical connections between bodily actions and abstract concepts that shape the way they think, reason, imagine, and talk."⁸⁸ In short, language is thoroughly metaphorical in nature.

85 Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 240–241. Boris Eichenbaum even talks about "verse form" as "the genuine content of verse speech" ("The Formal Method," in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan [Malden: Blackwell, 2004], 14).

86 Beardsley, "The Concept of Literature," 53, 54.

87 Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," 877. Cf. Jeff Mitscherling, Tanya Ditommaso, and Aref Nayed; *The Author's Intention* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004), 12.

88 Raymond Gibbs and Nicole Wilson, "Bodily Action and Metaphorical Meaning," *Style* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 530. Cf. Vittorio Gallese and George Lakoff, "The Brain's Concepts: The Role of the Sensory-Motor System in Conceptual Knowledge," *Cognitive Neuropsychology* 22, no. 3/4 (May/June, 2005): 455–479.

Further, it is clear that conceptual language is not only metaphorical, but also carries a variety of implicit attachments. For example, when the *Gospel of Mark* uses the word “wind storm,” the author is not simply talking about wind, but the abject fear engendered by the causal mechanism of winds (spiritual powers). The surrounding text is organized by these implicit categories, even though the text never explicitly mentions them. Our conclusion is that language is underlain by metaphorical processes and implicit attachments, so that all language has ‘implicit meaning.’

But what about those literary forms, such as the sonnet, meter, and genre? Are these more unique to aesthetic language? All language requires and occurs in ‘forms.’ There is no such thing as pure or direct language that occurs outside of categorizing forms. Consider the notion of rhythm. Shklovsky has noted that both ordinary and poetic speech use rhythm, so that rhythm by itself could not be a distinguishing feature. He concludes: “In a few special instances the language of poetry approximates the language of prose . . .”⁸⁹ Indeed, some political speeches and sermons use rhythm, and yet these are clearly ordinary language. Or consider our earlier example of: “I’ll get the president.” The genre in which it occurs determines how it is understood. *Literary categories govern the possibilities of meaning embodied in one’s production and reception of every collection of words, and so provide the types of meaning available to both speaker and hearer.* Form counts in ordinary language, and it attaches implicit meanings and categories to virtually all speech.

Finally, we should note that the use of ‘language forms’ as the criterion for literary language creates a problem in the definition of art. Identifying aesthetic language by its formal features suggests that literature is little more than a description of those elements. This would be similar to saying that a painting is defined by the local features of brush stroke, texture of canvas, paint type, color value, and technique. But art and literature are more than a collection of formal elements, otherwise criticism would become an activity in which, as Lamarque and Olsen remark, “mere description has replaced judgment.”⁹⁰

For these several reasons, criteria based on the relative number of formal features, or on a relative emphasis of literary form and implicit meaning, do not adequately separate aesthetic language from ordinary language. As Lamarque and Olsen write: “Formal properties, including those listed, occur in all kinds of texts to different degrees, so they do not themselves mark off what is of value

89 Victor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique,” in *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Forth Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), 758.

90 Lamarque and Olsen, “The Philosophy of Literature: Pleasure Restored,” 208–209.

in literature.”⁹¹ Stecker comes to the same conclusion using a wonderfully creative argument: he notes that styles of writing tend to generate counter-styles, so that any criteria based on a set of formal features would have to be extended to include the counter-styles and counter-features. The resulting conclusion is that “everything would be literature.”⁹²

Institutions, Procedures, and Practices

A number of authors suggest that literature is not defined by a different type of language, but by *the intentions and practices of the reader*. As these authors do not pose a different type of language, this is not quite the focus of the current discussion. Nevertheless, the notion that one's approach to literature diverges from one's approach to ordinary speech suggests a difference, and so deserves comment.

For authors like Lamarque and Olsen, literature is an institutional effect, given in the culture-specific conventions posited by the academy. They write that literary works “have no inherent formal features that constitute them as literary works . . . texts become literary works only by fulfilling a role in, and being subject to the conventions of, an institution.”⁹³ Literary works are read with the expectation of finding those conventions, and this ‘finding’ produces aesthetic pleasure. However, their approach does not suggest a separate language, either at the level of categories (forms, subjects, themes) or reading procedures (expectation of coherence, connectedness, interest).

Lamarque and Olsen proceed to suggest that the themes of literary works “are used to identify the point and purpose of the subject and the way in which the subject is presented.”⁹⁴ In other words, they recognize that literary works include a communicative framework. Of course, this is our point. They suggest that literary forms may add considerable complexity, requiring a higher synthesis in order to locate this coherence, but, we would add, such may also be the case in ordinary language. In the end, these approaches are not distinctive, as if approaches to ordinary language did not involve coherence, connectedness, or interest. They only reveal a difference in emphasis.

91 Ibid., 207. Similarly Maynard, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers*, 120–121.

92 Robert Stecker, “What is Literature?” in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 66.

93 Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen, “Literary Practice,” in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 60.

94 Ibid., 61. Similarly Stecker addresses the centrality of “cognitive value” and the “interpretation-centered value” to literature (Stecker, “What is Literature,” 68).

The Interaction Problem and Autonomy

This final section does not deal with the difference between ordinary language and aesthetic language *per se*, but with a problem created by positing this idea in the first place. If these languages are ontologically distinct, then a problem exists for the author who must use both. This is a manifestation of the interaction problem, which is a common problem in ontological dualisms. The interaction problem begins with Descartes, who struggled to show how mind, as one kind of substance, could interact with matter, as a different kind of substance. Here we are asking how ordinary language interacts with aesthetic language.

Let us assume, for this discussion, that aesthetic language is different from ordinary language: ordinary language functions in the development of concepts, while aesthetic language does not form concepts, but functions in the creation of aesthetic pleasure. Now, before the author writes in this aesthetic language, she begins with some concepts in ordinary language: she makes plans about genre, language, characters, plot, tone, and the like. This planning involves concepts, and so must, by definition, occur in ordinary language. After this initial planning, she attempts to write her novel in aesthetic language. However, the novel (aesthetic language) is, by definition, wholly disconnected from those initial concepts (ordinary language)! So how is it possible for an author, who uses ordinary language to plan the 'how' and 'what' that she desires to say, to produce an aesthetic work that is not about those concepts or plans?

One solution might be to separate cause and effect, as with Hume (above). The issue could be posed as follows: is it possible for a cause (ordinary language) to be so wholly disconnected from its effect (aesthetic language), that there is no relationship between the two? Our earlier discussion has shown the problems with this disconnection: the author, as the cause of the text, instantiates her intentional objects in the text as the design of the text (intentional causation). For this reason, the effect cannot be wholly disconnected from the cause, and so this solution fails to resolve the interaction problem.

Another possible resolution is based on the notion of supervenience. The issue could be put as follows: is it possible for ordinary language to produce emergent features that are ontologically different in type, so as to constitute an aesthetic language? This is the point of supervenience, where a group of elements results in the emergence of an ontologically new quality. In the present application, one might suggest that ordinary language results in the emergence of an aesthetic language, and that the aesthetic language is not reducible to its ordinary language components.

The problem, here, is that the same compositing elements are used in both types of languages, but then required have entirely separate functions.

Supervenience, as a model, is adequate to the task of creating a new kind of object, where nouns and verbs cause the emergence of temporal and causal elements. But it is inadequate to the task of creating a language where the compositing elements (nouns, verbs) of the original language, are identical to those elements in the emergent language (the same noun-function, verb-function), and so this solution fails to resolve the interaction problem.

A final solution might be that aesthetic language is built upon ordinary language, but with a qualitative difference. The issue could be asked as follows: is it possible for aesthetic language to function as a dialect of ordinary language? There is no question that many dialects of English exist, but none of these are sufficiently different, at the level of function, to qualify as ontologically distinct languages. There is also no question that metalanguages exist (a language that interprets language), but metalanguages are still composited by and expressed in one's natural language. Indeed, a metalanguage shifts in time as its natural language shifts. None of these appear to qualify as ontologically distinct entities. In the end, it appears that a two-language system creates a problem that it cannot solve.

Summary

From this discussion, it becomes clear that ordinary language cannot be clearly separated from aesthetic language. An example of a truly ontologically distinct language would be Knapp and Michaels' example, of words in the sand created by the action of the waves.⁹⁵ This 'language' would have sentence meaning (based on its resemblance to the formal features of ordinary language), but would not be designed for any type of communication or have any intentional object, and so would have no 'author meaning.' Consider a wave-produced text which contains the directive: "Pollute the ocean!" No one, hopefully, would interpret this as a command to be carried out under the direction of 'nature.' The police would not arrest the waves or tell them to stop such malicious behavior. Indeed, it would not be understood as being 'about' communication at all: it would be ontologically distinct.

Our conclusion is that aesthetic language and ordinary language are not ontologically distinct languages. Literature is bound to ordinary language: it originates in, is tied to, moves historically with, and functions within categories supplied by ordinary language. A narrative may have a greater preponderance of certain types of features or unusual emergent objects, and may even

95 The example is from Stephen Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, "The Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 54.

employ unusual forms (does anyone use the poetic structure of the ‘villanelle’ in ordinary speech?), but none of this creates an ontological barrier *to the communicative function of language* or *to writing being an intentional act*. Indeed, rare literary forms are just as available for employment in aesthetic works as in ordinary usage. So we occasionally hear political speakers and ministers using a cadence or rhyming scheme, and common gossip employing various narrative forms. Similarly Carroll concludes: “Our own position has been that these considerations do not require us in general to treat literature differently from ordinary discourse, except perhaps in certain limited instances.”⁹⁶ At the very least, the trace of ordinary language must bleed through in every aesthetic use of ordinary language’s elements.

With the demise of the aesthetic language argument, so goes the best option for separating the author from her text. The problems created by this separation, as examined earlier in this chapter, remain in force. Thus, the notion of textual autonomy has now been critiqued at the level of its philosophical roots and resulting effects. This makes the interpretive systems founded upon it problematic (Deconstruction, Reader-Response, New Literary Criticism, Russian Formalism, Structuralism, etc.). We will return to these systems in Chapter 8, *not by suggesting that they be relegated to the trash bin, but rather by examining how they fit into a broader notion of interpretation*.

96 Noël Carroll, “Art, Intention, and Conversation,” 113. Similarly E.D. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 90.

Connecting the Author and the Text

In the last chapter we showed that the notion of textual autonomy creates a series of problems at the level of ethics and communication. Now we turn to an alternative, that the author-text relation in some way ‘counts’ for the reader. But what is the basis for this connection? Does the author stand over the text, as a semi-mystical presence that controls the reading process with a guiding hand? Does the text only mean what the author states that it means? Irvin puts the problem humorously, when she asks if an author can write “broccoli” and then state that the meaning was “cauliflower!”¹

One way of getting to the heart of this issue is by examining a recorded discussion between two literary theorists, James Phelan and J. Kincaid. Kincaid argues that a text deserves no respect, as it is only a set of marks on a page. For him, meaning is constructed by readers, from the codes and methods that they apply. The marks on the page deserve no respect, as they are not connected to their author (textual autonomy). Phelan argues the opposite. He states that a text, without some connection to the author, could be manipulated to say anything. Indeed, he notes that readers could manipulate Kincaid’s text to show that he argues for showing respect to texts! Phelan then makes the critical point:

Kincaid knows—and you and I also know—that his text disputes those points. Because we all know that much, we also recognize that my claim to have persuaded him disrespects his text. I, at least, believe that Kincaid and his text deserve better.²

In this exchange, Phelan suggests that some connection between Kincaid and his text exists, *so that showing disrespect to the text is also, in some way, showing disrespect to the author*. No matter how ill-defined this connection, ignoring it creates the problems addressed in the last chapter. As the text is the expression of the author’s subjectivity, it functions as the author’s voice in the world, and ‘voices’ are not suitable objects for manipulation. In the present chapter, we will turn to these issues and the ethics involved.

1 Sherri Irvin, “Authors, Intentions and Literary Meaning,” *Philosophy Compass* 1/2 (2006): 114; accessed June 5, 2012, doi: 10.1111/j.1747-9991.2006.00016.x.

2 James Kincaid and James Phelan, “What Do We Owe Texts: Respect, Irreverence or Nothing at All,” in *Critical Inquiry* 25, no. 4 (Summer 1999), 763; in the original, JK is used for Kincaid.

Authorial Subjectivity and Reproduction

This discussion begins with our earlier conclusion, that authors are subjects. Humans are not wholly the product of their culture, experiences, psychological laws, and language. Better put, humans cannot be reduced to these, as if they could conclusively tell us who a person is and what they will do. Authors are capable of creating newness, via the specialized processes of the hermeneutic circle, supervenience, divergent thinking, unique connections, and special emphases. More specifically to our concerns, authors can create paradigm shifts, new metaphors, defamiliarized descriptions, new plot types, malapropisms, and the like. But how does the author instantiate these in the text?

As a subject who is capable of creating newness, the author engages in writing. Writing occurs as an intentional act, which means that writing originates in and is structured by the author's desires. The text represents a concrete outworking of those desires. The author proceeds by intentional causation, where the author imagines what she wants to say/do and then shapes language to reproduce this 'something' as the text. But this shaping of language does not occur outside of culture. It requires that the author access her cultural treasury for *literary forms* (e.g., the structure of genre, figures of speech), *social institutions* (e.g., political structures, family structures), and even *language itself* (e.g., alphabet, words, syntax). Indeed, the author cannot consciously plan her text without accessing these. In other words, the concrete manifestation of her desires—the text—represents a synthesis of the author's subjectivity and culture (along with her psychology, on which see below). The text cannot be reduced to any one, as if one were primary and the others derivative. All are utilized in creating textual elements so that all are reproduced in the text . . . at least from the author's point of view. As we concluded in Chapter 3: "The author engages in the dialectical process of repackaging her culture in the text, even as she is shaping a new world out of those cultural elements."

Others have also noted this process of 'reproduction.' Marx suggests that productive work is a reproduction of the self:

The worker puts his life into the object . . . for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created.³

3 Karl Marx, "Estranged Labour (1844)," in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994], 440, 444.

Indeed, the notion that the author reproduces her culture is commonplace in modern literary theory. It forms the basis for many interpretive schools, which recognize the power of cultural reproduction as a form of hegemony in the text (Womanist criticism, African-American criticism, Marxist criticism, etc.). These schools engage in critiques of those reproduced elements of patriarchy, economic structures, and Eurocentric thinking. In a similar way, the notion that the author reproduces her psychology in the text, such as the Oedipus complex, is commonplace. Our point is this: *if a text can be viewed as a reproduction of one's culture (patriarchal) or a reproduction of one's psychology (Oedipus complex), then it may also be viewed as a reproduction of one's subjectivity.*

Now, if the author's voice is characterized as a reproduction of her subjectivity, psychology, and culture, then we must examine the nature of 'reproduction.' When an author reproduces her culture in her text, she is creating an object that is directly reducible to a known cultural object. These objects already exist in culture, and so are publically recognizable and accessible. They can even be reduced to concepts and encoded in conceptual language. For example, the author can reproduce the cultural practice of 'paying women less for the same work' or 'always referring to God with male pronouns,' and this can be reduced to the conceptual language of androcentrism, and an underlying symbolic universe of male priority. On the other hand, when an author reproduces her subjectivity in the text, she is creating something which does not exist (except by coincidence) in culture. She is creating a 'newness' which, by definition, is 'other' with respect to the reader-in-culture.

For the author, this newness does not seem problematic. She, functioning as an implied authorA who writes to an authorial audience, encodes it in language, and generally expects that readers from the intended audience will have no trouble in reproducing it. But it may be quite a problematic issue for readers, who find themselves trying to construct an object that does not exist.

Let us examine this by returning to our example of a worker who cut into the gasoline drum, because she was told that it was 'empty.' For her, 'empty' meant that the container did not contain any liquid and so was no longer reactive. However, the container blew up, because it still contained gas fumes. After this, the worker changed her grasp of empty, by retaining the notion of 'no liquid,' but now with the subjective addition of 'still reactive.' Henceforth, she will use the word 'empty' *in an idiosyncratic way with respect to her culture, by supplying this subjective attachment from her personal experience.* Now this worker might write the following: "The empty drum is at risk for blowing up." For her, this is a perfectly natural sentence.

However, it is not for the reader. The reader locates the word 'empty' with the normal categories of 'no liquid' and 'not reactive.' The phrase 'at risk for

blowing up' creates a disjunction with his expectations: 'empty' should be followed by 'not at risk for blowing up.' He is confused, and just this confusion shows that the reader is capable of recognizing the subjective attachment. The reader expects a thoroughgoing design within the text, but when he imposes his culture's normal use of 'empty,' such cannot be had. The imposition of his cultural conceptual system *creates elements that cannot be brought into coherence within that system.*

A similar situation exists where the reader imposes a foreign cultural system on the text. We examined this in Chapter 4, using the example of the *Demon Possessed Boy* (Mark 9:14–27) as read by a post-Enlightenment reader. The application of this reader's social institution of illness *creates a set of textual objects which cannot be brought into a satisfactory synthesis within that institution.* The similarity between the two situations is that both impose a construct on the text that is different from what the author (implied authorA) used to construct her text, and from what she expected the reader (intended audience) to use.

However, there is also a difference. In the '*Demon Possessed Boy*' example, the reader is applying a cultural context that is different from what the author expects, and so creating a cross-cultural disjunction. But in the 'empty gas drum' example, the reader is using the expected cultural context—this is an intra-cultural disjunction. The intra-cultural disjunction occurs because the reader utilized the conventional language of the intended audience, while the author slipped in a subjective attachment. Herein the reader has not encountered the expected 'voice of culture,' but the unexpected 'voice of the author.'

Let us examine these notions with another biblical example: *The Man with the Withered Hand* (Mk. 3:1–5). As this event occurs on the Sabbath, we open with a review of the practices relevant to our example. In 1st century Jewish Palestine, the Sabbath was a central social and religious institution. Jubilees 2:27–28 (2nd century BCE) suggests its importance:

And everyone who pollutes it (the Sabbath) let him surely die. And anyone who will do work therein, let him surely die forever so that the Children of Israel might guard this day throughout their generations and not be uprooted from the land because it is a holy day and a blessed day. And every man who guards it and keeps therein a Sabbath from all his work will be holy and blessed always like us.⁴

4 O.S. Wintermute, transl., *Jubilees*, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 58.

In an effort to protect the Sabbath, so as to maintain the notion of sacred time, authorities created a “fence around the Law” (m. Abot 1.1), which listed activities not permitted on the Sabbath.⁵ Herein the readers are warned against various healing practices on the Sabbath: “And they do not induce vomiting. And they do not straighten (the limb of) a child or set a broken limb. He whose hand or foot was dislocated should not pour cold water over them . . .” (m. Shabbat 22:6).⁶ Certain exceptions were allowed, as when one’s life was at stake:

Further did R. Mattiah b. Harash say, “He who has a pain in his throat—they drop medicine into his mouth on the Sabbath, because it is a matter of doubt as to danger to life. And any matter of doubt as to danger to life overrides the prohibitions of the Sabbath.” (m. Yoma 8:6)

However, some groups took the Sabbath prohibition to the extreme, by not even allowing for this exception: “The wet-nurse should not lift the baby to go out or come in on the Sabbath” and “any living man who falls into a place of water or into a [reservoir], no-one should take him out with a ladder or a rope or a utensil” (CD 11:10, 16–17). Indeed, non-Jewish authors often made note of the strictness with which the Jewish populace observed such prohibitions.⁷

In this cultural context, the reader comes upon the story of *The Man with the Withered Hand*. Here the authorities watch Jesus, to see if he will heal a man’s hand on the Sabbath. After calling the man forward, Jesus asks if it is permitted “to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath.” Given the contextual materials, the expected answer is that “keeping the Sabbath law was the ‘good’ . . .”⁸ Yet Jesus does the opposite, heals this non-life threatening illness, and so violates existing Sabbath practices. This creates a disjunction for those who apply the usual social (religious) institutions. The reader is surprised at Jesus’ disregard for Sabbath practices, and bewildered over how to evaluate the subsequent healing. After all, there are six ‘common’ days on which to heal someone’s hand, and a godly person wouldn’t deliberately violate Sabbath practices for

5 Leonard Kravitz and Kerry Olitzky write: “The rabbis used the metaphor of a fence around the Torah as a means of protecting the essence of Torah in the midst of a proliferation of new demands . . . as they knew the Torah would continue to need to grow if the Jewish community was to survive” (*Pirke Avot: A Modern Commentary on Jewish Ethics* (New York: UAHC Press, 1993), 2.

6 All citations of the Mishnah are from Jacob Neusner, transl., *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

7 Cf. Louis Feldman and Meyer Reinhold, *Jewish Life and Thought Among Greeks and Romans: Primary Readings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 366–373.

8 Robert Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, Word Biblical Commentary 34a (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 134.

something as minor as this. How can he proclaim the kingdom of God when he acts like this?

But the reader is in for yet another surprise. In this text, the author defines 'good' by its parallelism with 'saving life,' and then contextualizing 'saving life' as healing a man's hand. Guelich notes the disjunction: "Jesus alters the Jewish understanding of saving a life in terms of mortal danger. How does healing a crippled hand equal 'saving a life'?"⁹ Clearly, another disjunction occurs here. The reader cannot but be baffled by these connections.

These reactions, of 'surprised,' 'bewildered,' and 'baffled,' suggest that the reader has encountered disjunctions, where the reader has applied the usual cultural context to the text, only to create objects that no longer fit into this context. He has applied the typical uses of words, social institutions, and symbolic universe, but has created something that he does not recognize. Herein, he has not encountered the 'voice' of culture, but the 'voice' of the author (we will turn to resolving such disjunctions in Chapter 7).

To this point, we have addressed reproductions of the author's culture and subjectivity in the text, but the author also reproduces her psychology in the text. Psychological reproductions represent a special case, in that some elements function as 'reproductions of culture' while others as 'reproductions of subjectivity.' Let us explore this complexity with the examples of a 'repressed desire' and the 'superego.'

According to Freud, all humans have repressed desires of which they are unaware, but which still manifest themselves in various actions. These manifestations do not generally follow rational laws, so that the links between repressed desires and their concrete manifestation are often opaque. Such desires can become expressed in art (sublimation), where condensation and displacement reshape the repressed desires into more 'acceptable' forms.¹⁰ Because these processes utilize non-logical connections, the manifestation of an identical repressed desire may vary from person to person. As the manifestation cannot be rationally predicted or reliably connected to its origin, it has the quality of irreducibility, and so tends to follow the pathway of subjectivity. But the example of the superego is different. This has the structure of the surrounding culture, and can be reduced to understanding as a cultural object. When the author reproduces the superego in her writing, she is reiterating another form of commonness that is reducible to concepts.

From this discussion, it is clear that reproduced materials are of several types. But the central distinction, for our purposes, is that some reproductions

9 Ibid., 135.

10 We will discuss the processes of condensation and displacement in Chapter 7.

are of cultural objects (social institutions, symbolic universe, cultural models, social practices), while others are of the author's subjectivity (newness). Where the author codes the former in the text, readers generally reduce these to understanding through the standard application of public language. But where the author codes the latter, readers generally encounter a disjunction in the use of public language, which requires specialized processes in order to initiate understanding.

Reproduction and Ethics

This discussion has brought us to a central issue. It is clear that authors reproduce their subjectivity in the text, and that such moments create disjunctions for their readers. The reduction of such disjunctions may require considerable time and effort. But why 'should' readers take the time and effort to do this? Our contention is that this devolves to a question of ethics and, in particular, one's ethical responsibility toward another subject. Gregory's comments on ethics and literature provide an introduction:

In everyday life at every level ethics is *the* central issue of human interactions because *nothing* is more important to us than whether other people treat us with honesty or deceit, kindness or cruelty, stinginess or generosity, compassion or callousness, contempt or charity, fairness or unfairness, respect or disrespect, and whether they acknowledge, apologize for, or offer restitution for any violations of these ethical standards . . .¹¹

To the degree that the author reproduces her subjectivity in the text, the text functions as her voice in the world. As noted earlier, the voice is that of the implied authorA, though with the shadowy image of the actual author always standing in the background . . . for the implied authorA itself is a manifestation of the actual author's subjectivity. This brings us to the issue of one's ethical responsibilities toward that voice. While readers are under no formal constraints to follow the text's designs, as we showed in Chapter 4, this was predicated upon the notion of textual autonomy, where the text was formulated as an object/It in the world. Now that we have made the case that it functions as the author's voice, we turn to the ethical questions: Are there ethical

¹¹ Marshall Gregory, "Redefining Ethical Criticism," *Journal of Literary Theory* 4, no. 2 (December 2010): 284, accessed May 30, 2014, Humanities International Compete, EBSCOhost.

and unethical uses of someone's voice? Is it ethical to silence or manipulate a subject's voice? Is it ethical to use a voice instrumentally, for each reader's own ends (desires and interests), whatever these might be?

Given that the biblical text, or any text, is partially constituted as a reproduction of the author's subjectivity, an ethics of reading begins at this point: humans are subjects. By way of review, we worked out this concept in Chapter 2, beginning with a child's acquisition of language, and then the shaping of language by personal experience. Subsequently we examined how subjectivity utilizes specialized processes in the creation of newness (Chapter 3), and how this newness is reproduced in the text (this chapter). This remains the case even when accounting for the notion of an implied authorA, for the author's subjectivity is still acting through this construct, which functions as a role that the actual author assumes during her time of writing. Indeed, the implied authorA is itself a manifestation of the author's subjective creation.¹²

The human-as-subject is not like other objects in the world. The human utilizes physical and biological processes, but the content and direction of her thought cannot be reduced to these. A 'car' can be reduced to physical processes. Each part can be categorized and classified, along with the interactions of these parts, so that the car's actions are predictable based on laws of physics and chemistry. Every time one turns the key, one expects the engine to start (provided that the parts are working). One does not expect different actions every time the key is turned. On the other hand, when one pokes a human with a key, one can only expect a variety of possible actions: turning with raised fists, running in fear, falling to the ground, crying in pain, shouting accusations, asking why this was done, calling for help, and so on. Even more, some actions will occur that are wholly unexpected: bowing down (as if this were an initiation exercise), standing stoically (as if this were a test of one's character), laughing (as if this were a rite of passage), and so on. The point is that the actions of a subject cannot be predicted with certainty, suggesting that the human is not reducible to fixed laws (strong versions of Freud's psychic determinism, Skinner's behaviorism, Marx's economic determinism, Whorf's linguistic determinism, Wilson's biological determinism, etc.). Humans are

12 The implied authorA is still attached to the actual author via intentional causation, and may itself be a profound example of the author's subjective newness. Consider where the author uses her subjectivity to create an implied authorA who rejects the actual author's beliefs (e.g., the genre of fantasy).

not, as Skinner suggested, mechanisms which can be programmed to meet “acceptable specifications.”¹³

Humans have the capacity for subjectivity, and while subjectivity *may be rooted in biochemistry, it is not reducible to biochemistry*.¹⁴ This means that humans are not wholly predictable, and so are not to be treated as if their acts were determined or as if they conformed to the ‘sameness’ of some deterministic law. In this way, subjectivity is not only a rejection of strong determinism, but also a rejection of one’s ‘sameness’ with respect to others. The human-as-subject who stands before me is not reducible to ‘me,’ as if a projection of myself could account for her. The ‘other’ transcends this projection, transgresses my categories, and exceeds my horizons. The other comes to me in many ways like ‘myself,’ but she also comes with an irreducible strangeness.

Buber gets at this same notion by stating that a Thou is not like information, for Thou is not an object: “Every *It* is bounded by others; *It* exists only though being bounded by others. But when *Thou* is spoken, there is no thing. *Thou* has no bounds.”¹⁵ Levinas tracks along the same lines. He suggests that the human is not an object, for objects are reducible to categories, and so are manifestations of “the Same.”¹⁶ Humans, on the other hand, are beyond (exceed, are not confined by, transgress) the categories that I project onto objects, and so remain irreducible to my classifications and themes. For Levinas, humans are infinite in the way that Platonic ideals are infinite: they are irreducible and can only be characterized by a ‘more than.’¹⁷

13 B.F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1953), 427. This is a form of ‘hard determinism,’ though softer forms also occur. Cf. Robert Young, “The implications of determinism,” in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Malden: Blackwell, 1993), esp. 536–540.

14 Here I suggest the process of supervenience, where an emergent quality (subjectivity as a capacity) arises because of the interaction of compositing elements (on supervenience, see Chapter 3, fn. 26). This is a form of non-reductive physicalism.

15 Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Smith (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1937), 4.

16 Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, “Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite,” in *To The Other*, Adriaan Peperzak (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 1993), 109.

17 Emmanuel Levinas summarizes: “The idea of the infinite . . . is a thought which, in its phenomenology, does not allow itself to be reduced, without remainder, to the act of consciousness of a subject, to pure thematizing intentionality” (“Transcendence and Intelligibility,” in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996], 155–157). Also cf. Emmanuel Levinas, “Transcendence and Height,” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, esp. 21–22.

The problem, for an ethics of reading, is that language implies the opposite. Authors express themselves in language, creating what we call the ‘voice of the author,’ and this suggests that we can know another person by what they say. For Levinas, language reduces the subject to the sameness of language—to my categories, my classifications, and my ontologies. It bounds and transmits the infinite subject as though the human were an object, and in this way language is, in Levinas’ words, “a betrayal.”¹⁸

However, Levinas’ notion of language suggests that language is a reproduction of culture: culture’s categories, classifications, and themes. Our notion is that writing includes a reproduction of the author’s subjectivity, whether the author and reader recognize this or not. Even at the level of ‘word usage,’ subjectivity bleeds through—as in our examples of ‘empty’ and ‘saving life.’ The author may think that she is using language in a wholly conventional way, but the residue of subjective experience remains, so that subjectivity infects all levels of language. In short, there are always private elements in one’s use of language, though these are generally of small significance. But should they assume larger significance, then language successively slips into idiosyncratic usage.

For an ethic of reading, this suggests two conclusions. First, as all humans are subjects, there is a basic egalitarianism at the functional level—all humans are capable of creating newness—in contrast, say, to the accomplishments of rocks and trees.¹⁹ Second, it suggests that the author’s voice cannot be reduced to the sameness that characterizes my subjectivity: her voice comes to me as

18 Emmanuel Levinas, “Essence and Disinterestedness,” in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 112–113. Of course, this is all a bit overdrawn. So Ricoeur notes that, while otherness exists, it is not so radical as to be wholly exterior or absolutely other. He sees this as hyperbole, where Levinas poses “(n)o middle ground, no between . . . to lessen the utter dissymmetry between the Same and the Other” (Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992], 338). Such a dissymmetry would result in an absence of any common ground, and so of “a capacity of reception, of discrimination, and of recognition . . .” (Ibid., 339).

19 Note that, for Levinas, there is an asymmetry (non-egalitarianism) in the relation of the self to the other, where the face of the other creates *demands on me* that are prior to my recognition that my face creates *demands on him*. As he summarizes: “The Other must be closer to God than I” (Levinas, “Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite,” 111–112). Only after reflection, as a secondary process, do we come to the notion of equality. Cf. Adriaan Peperzak, *To The Other* (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 1993), 28. On the other hand, I base egalitarianism on the symmetry of subjectivity, so that there is always an ethical tension between acting for self vs. acting for the other.

a stranger with an irreducible component. However, this egalitarian formulation does not necessitate that I respect her strangeness. As Hobbes has demonstrated, an egalitarian society can still result in “a war of all against all.”²⁰ More is needed to define ethical relations.

So we come to our second notion, which is the recognition of value, just because humans are subjects. The basic notion, here, is that all humans are subjects, and this is a sufficient reason for assigning intrinsic value to each. Grounding ‘human value’ has always proven difficult, but in the post-Darwinian world this is especially so. Scientific rationality denies the notion of value ‘from above,’ and replaces it with a long line of chance-driven evolutionary processes. The human—individually or collectively—is little more than an advanced animal, struggling for survival in a competitive environment with limited resources.²¹ Each person has instrumental value for the collective’s survival (or, given the constraints of evolutionary psychology, genetic survival), *but not an intrinsic value that is prior to issues of survival.*

However, one can also find intuitions for this notion of intrinsic value. Emmanuel Levinas suggests that such occurs in the experience of another’s face. Let me begin with one of my examples, that of a young child who walks up to an adult in a busy department store and states: “I am lost.” It is virtually impossible, unless one is a sociopath, to turn away from the face of a lost child. Even as a complete stranger, that face creates an ethical demand which is given in the experience, and not rationally constructed.²² I find that the human *who is without claim to my attention, nevertheless claims my attention by the fact of her presence.*

20 Thomas Hobbes, “Leviathan,” in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 207.

21 Cf. Michael Ruse’s notes on evolutionary psychology: “Once we see that our moral beliefs are simply an adaptation put in place by natural selection, in order to further our reproductive ends, that is an end to it. Morality is no more than a collective illusion fobbed off on us by our genes for reproductive ends” (“The Significance of Evolution,” in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer [Malden: Blackwell, 1993], 506).

22 I am using “given” in the sense of ‘prior to subjective or cognitive additions.’ Cf. John Wild, where this notion “. . . indicates the attempt to avoid subjective distortion and construction” (“The Concept of The Given in Contemporary Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1, no. 1 [September 1940]: 70); or, as in Alan Goldman, of an “immediate apprehension of the contents of sense experience, expressed in first person, present tense reports of appearances” (“Given, The,” in *A Companion to Epistemology*, ed. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa [Malden: Blackwell, 1992], 159). See discussion for Levinas’ notes and possible mechanism.

Now, one might suggest that this is due to emotional empathy, where I grasp what it is like to be in that child's circumstances. But this fails to address the component of value: I do not just 'feel' her lost-ness and then turn away. That is the problem with our first ethical principle, of an egalitarian structure which would allow for empathy, but lacks the notion of value. Rather, I act in such a way as to reveal my valuing of this lost child. Her presence makes an intrinsic claim not just to my attention, but to my resources as well.

I think that this is what Levinas means when he states that the presentation of a face creates an ethical demand, and the most basic demand is: "You shall not kill" this person with this face.²³ Levinas states it poetically:

But he can also—and here is where he presents me his face—oppose himself to me beyond all measure, with the total uncoveredness and nakedness of his defenseless eyes, the straightforwardness, the absolute frankness of his gaze. . . . true exteriority is in this gaze which forbids me my conquest.²⁴

The value of the individual is given in the experience of meeting and encounter. So Levinas talks about a face as "pure experience, conceptless experience."²⁵

23 Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite," 109. Cf. Jens Zimmerman: "... a command that Levinas enlarges in traditional fashion to mean 'thou shalt do everything in order that the other may live . . . All the rest is perhaps an attempt to think this' (*Recovering Theological Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 222). We further suggest that such an ethical principle can be derived on an intersubjective base, and so bears the marks of universality (a Kantian categorical imperative). This begins with a discussion, where all individuals are gathered and debate this issue (the moral rightness of 'you shall not kill') under some form of discourse ethics (all are allowed to speak, language is used communicatively, etc.). They do this with all of their biases and backgrounds intact, so that they represent themselves and their own interests (no 'universal legislator' concepts, as in Rousseau). Finally, the discussion must count for each member, so that each has a vested interest: the results will be directly applied to each participant. Should the group decide that 'you shall not kill' is an ethical boundary, then none of the members will be killed; but should they decide that it is ethical, then such is done (this is similar to Rawls, where members don't know their place vis-à-vis the results, only now the results are applied globally, so that statistical chance-taking cannot be used as an objection). It is expected that such a group will reach the consensus that killing is a moral evil.

24 Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite," 109–110.

25 Ibid., 118. Earlier Levinas states: "No movement of freedom could appropriate a face to itself or seem to 'constitute' it" (Ibid.).

Or, as Beals summarizes, it “is not something that can be proven . . . it simply is a brute fact.”²⁶

This notion, of experience that is prior to thinking and reasoning, may be modeled on the emerging scientific understanding of empathy. A number of studies have shown that empathy functions as a subcortical (pre-cognitive) program that is automatically activated by visual cues, such as seeing a person in pain.²⁷ This is similar to Ekman’s notion of ‘automatic appraisal mechanisms,’ where a stimulus automatically activates one of the basic emotions.²⁸ In each of these, a visual cue activates a program that is prior to any reflection on the situation—it is prior to any cognitive analysis. The thinking and reasoning only come later. Indeed, this sounds very much like Buber’s notion of Thou as “revelatory,” where later cognitive reflection “misses the truth of the event . . . instead of allowing the gift to work itself out . . .”²⁹

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- 26 Corey Beals, *Levinas and the Love of Wisdom* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 99. Beals proceeds to show the psychological damage that accrues to the person who ignores this brute fact: “To look these victims in the face and kill them caused the killers to have physical ailments as well as psychic exhaustion and hallucinations” (Ibid., 102).
 - 27 Singer’s group writes: “The finding of empathy-related activation suggests an automatic engagement of empathic processes when perceiving pain in others” (Tania Singer, Ben Seymour, John O’Doherty, Holger Kaube, Raymond Dolan, and Chris Frith, “Empathy for Pain Involves the Affective but not Sensory Components of Pain,” *Science* 303, no. 5661 [Feb. 20, 2004], 1160). Similarly Stephanie Preston and Frans de Wall, “Empathy, Its Proximate and Ultimate Bases,” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 25 (Feb 2002), 12.
 - 28 Paul Ekman writes: “Since the interval between stimulus and emotional response is sometimes extraordinarily short, the appraisal mechanism must be capable of operating with great speed. Often the appraisal is not only quick but it happens without awareness, so I must postulate that the appraisal mechanism is able to operate automatically” (“Basic Emotions,” in *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, ed. T. Dalgleish and M. Power [Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 1999], 51).
 - 29 Buber, *I and Thou*, 116. Earlier Buber writes: “The elementary impressions and emotional stirrings that waken the spirit of the ‘natural man’ proceed from incidents—experience of a being confronting him—and from situations—life with a being confronting him—that are relational in character” (Ibid., 19). Indeed: “Reflexion . . . makes God into an object” (Ibid., 116). Also cf. Heidegger’s notion of art as “unconcealedness” which is experienced as “a happening of truth,” and is like our notion of ‘given in experience,’ so that interpretation involves “to keep at a distance all the preconceptions and assaults of the above modes of thought, to leave the thing to rest in its own self . . . in its very own essence” (Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Martin Heidegger Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977], 161, 164, 165).

All of this is to say that human subjectivity confers a special value which is not found, say, in rocks and trees.³⁰ Valuing subjectivity means that the other has intrinsic value or, in the older way of speaking, ‘human dignity.’³¹ The Jewish and Christian traditions ground this in the notion that humans were made ‘in the image of God,’ which means, first of all, that there is an equal structure ‘in’ all humans. As Kellner quips: “. . . your neighbor is no less created in the image of God than you are.”³² Second, it assumes that this image of God is of such value—both to God and to humans—that one dare not deface it (manipulation), buy or sell it (slavery), or destroy it (“Thou shall not kill”).³³ Indeed, Gregory of Nyssa, writing in the 300s, used the ‘likeness to God’ argument as his primary defense against slavery: “What payment do you exchange for your nature which God has fashioned . . . He who knows human nature says that the world is not an adequate exchange for man’s soul.”³⁴

For an ethic of reading, these two pathways to intrinsic human value—as ‘given in experience’ and as defined by ‘the image of God’—suggest that the voice of the author has value just because it is a manifestation of her subjectivity, and so deserves the reader’s respect. However, this is still an insufficient

30 Here we have made the leap of identifying the quality which creates intrinsic value and so demands respect. Other authors have suggested other qualities. Philip Pettit summarizes our concern: “Non-consequentialisms all identify certain values as suitable for honoring rather than promoting . . . It is another to say why these values are so very different from the ordinary run of desirable properties. There may be features that mark them off from other values, but why do those features matter so much?” (“Consequentialism,” in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer [Malden: Blackwell, 1991], 238.)

31 Traditionally, human dignity has been attached to human reason and rationality. This use of reason is usually oriented about choice, so that—in practice—it is really about a species of human freedom. However, freedom is not grounded in reason but in subjectivity, for reason is grounded in the laws of logic (cf. the claim that ‘any rational person would choose xyz’), while subjectivity is grounded in irreducibility and so is unattached to laws. Subjectivity doesn’t just result in freedom, it is the very notion of freedom. Thus, ‘human dignity’ is actually about human subjectivity.

32 Menachem Kellner, “Jewish ethics,” in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Malden: Blackwell, 1991), 85.

33 This goes to the fact/value distinction: the fact that people are made in the image of God is universal, and as such it attached to a certain value of the human; as a result of this inherent value, s/he is due a certain level of respect. This is somewhat different from Levinas and Buber, where the fact of the other is already found in the experience of their value: the notion of the ‘human as a Thou’ or the ‘experience of the face’ occurs as a pre-cognitive ethical demand.

34 Gregory of Nyssa, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, Fourth Homily, trans. Richard McCambly, accessed July 5, 2013, <http://www.sage.edu/faculty/salomd/nyssa/eccl.html>.

basis for ethical relations, for one might preferentially value the subject only if the actions emanating from her subjectivity were of a certain quality, perhaps on some scale of acquired social value or literary skill.

So we come to a third notion, that this valuation is based on being a subject, and not on the actions emanating from that subject. If one's value were based on one's accomplishments, then infants would have less value than adults! Indeed, if value were based on one's talents, qualities, or skills, then it would be appropriate to 'breed' humans for such qualities (eugenics), manipulate humans to certain ends (Skinner's behaviorism), and preferentially value certain humans (Nietzsche's great-man ethics). In these paths, value is a constituted notion, based on some criterion chosen by some group for some end (as in classical utilitarianism).

But valuing subjectivity is based on a notion of given-ness, either to my experience ('the face') or by definition ('the image of God'). We might call this the human's primordial value. Since one's primordial value is prior to all actions, and so not based on accomplishments, there is no initial basis for generating gradations of value (such can only be added secondarily). It is not as if I have more intrinsic worth because I've been elected to some office or volunteer at the local food bank. The subject's primordial value is prior to all of these, and so not dependent upon any.

For an ethic of reading, this suggests that the voice of the author is not initially valued because of the author's talents at writing or historical actions in the world, but just because it is a manifestation of her subjectivity. However, this is still an inadequate basis for ethics: one could still choose to manipulate or silence the other, as if their primordial value did not count with respect to one's own primordial value (cf. the various forms of egoism, where the individual defines value and ethics on the basis of his/her own interests). After all, why should their 'having value' cause me to pay them anything above minimum wage, or stop me from deceiving, manipulating, or silencing them?

Finally, we bring in the notion that subjects of equal value should treat each other as subjects of equal value. I would no more deceive, manipulate, or silence a person of equal value to myself, than I would knowingly deceive, manipulate, or silence myself.³⁵ Manipulating the other to meet one's own desires is an instrumental use of the other. But instrumental uses are based on

35 This is different from the principle of 'treating others in the same way that I want to be treated by them,' as this ties ethical actions to a symmetrical relation for the sake of the symmetrical relation. Our principle is grounded in a symmetrical relation for the sake of a common intrinsic value. This is also different from the social contract tradition, which is based on reciprocity (anthropology's 'balanced reciprocity'). Our principle doesn't assign

unequal valuations of the subjects involved. For example, slavery represents an instrumental use of the other, where one values one's own capacity to act freely in order to achieve one's goals, more than one values the other's capacity to do the same. Instrumentality is tied to an asymmetrical relation between the two, which—at some point—requires a rejection of one of our early ethical principles.

For an ethic of reading, this suggests that readers would no more silence or manipulate the author's voice than they would silence or manipulate their own. The voice has equal value regardless of who is talking, and so should be treated as having equal value. This does not mean that the reader cannot evaluate and reject the ideas of another person, but *only that these ideas deserve the same evaluative consideration that one affords one's own ideas*. In short, readers treat the author's text with the same respect that they grant their own. By way of contrast, confer Latimer's summary of neopragmatism: "The consumer of poetry assumes priority over any objective item consumed."³⁶

This formulation is remarkably similar to certain ethical principles found in Kant and Rawls. This is because their principles are derived from similar notions, namely that humans are equal, free, and valuable. While they create these ideas in different ways, the principles so derived bear a similarity to ours, and so may shed some light on our ethic of reading. We begin with a quick look at Kant's grounding:

Supposing, however, that there were something whose existence has in itself an absolute worth, something which, being an end in itself, could be a source of definite laws . . . Now I say: man and generally any rational being exists as an end in himself . . . rational beings, on the contrary, are called persons because their very nature points them out as ends in themselves, that is as something which must not be used merely as means, and are therefore called things; rational beings, on the contrary, are called persons . . .³⁷

value in order to be treated with the same value, but assigns value intrinsically, regardless of how the other makes his/her evaluation of me.

36 Dan Latimer, "American Neopragmatism and Its Background," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 366.

37 Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics*, trans. Thomas Abbott (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1895), 55; accessed June 1, 2014, https://openlibrary.org/books/OL24181971M/Fundamental_principles_of_the_Metaphysics_of_ethics.

From these notions, Kant works out the actions of mutual respect through his concept of a “good will,” which acts out of duty, as opposed to acting out of “feelings, impulses, or inclinations . . .”³⁸ After all, feelings, impulses, and inclinations may change with the situation or the people involved, *while duty based on internally held principles—such as the intrinsic value of the person—does not*. Of particular importance are Kant’s ‘categorical imperatives,’ the second of which reads: “So act as to treat humanity . . . in every case as an end withal, never as a means only.”³⁹ The human is not a chess piece to be moved about, towards another’s ends. As O’Neill notes, this principle “is a demand for respect for persons . . . it requires at least some support for others’ projects and purposes.”⁴⁰

For an ethic of reading, this emphasizes that the voice of the author should not be used as a means towards the ends of the reader, as one might use a chess piece, so that a text is not a suitable object for manipulation. This is Hirsch’s point, where he states that speech is “an extension and expression of men in the social domain” so that texts must be treated “as ends in themselves . . .”⁴¹ Similarly Betti, who “regarded texts as manifestations of spirit, and manifestations of spirit, unlike things, are to be respected and not merely used.”⁴²

Rawls, on the other hand, deals with issues of equality in political systems. He begins with a principle of fairness, where “free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests . . . accept an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association.”⁴³ He suggests a procedure for doing this, where legislators place themselves behind a “veil of ignorance,” and then act as if they do not know their position in society, so that “no one is in a position to tailor principles to his advantage . . .”⁴⁴ While the notion

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Onora O’Neill, “Kantian ethics,” in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer (Malden: Blackwell, 1991), 178, 179.

41 E.D. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 90.

42 Jeff Mitscherling, Tanya Ditommaso, and Aref Nayed, *The Author’s Intention* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004), 73.

43 John Rawls, “A Theory of Justice,” in *Princeton Readings in Political Thought*, ed. Mitchell Cohen and Nicole Fermon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 672. Note that Rawls ties this to family structure: “Members of a family commonly do not wish to gain unless they can do so in ways that further the interests of the rest” (Ibid., 684). Such structures are characterized by coordination as opposed to competition. It is of note that evolutionary psychologists suggest ‘coordination’ as a universal principle, in service to human survival.

44 Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 686.

that one can blind one's self is deeply problematic and really quite impossible, there remains value to an approach where legislators attempt to act without regard to their position in society.

For an ethic of reading, this suggests that the reader attempts to treat that text as if he did not know the identity of the author, so that he treats every narrative *as if it might have been written by himself*. This is not to suggest that readers attempt to be 'neutral' by removing their cultural worldview or their position in culture, but only that they not know their position vis-à-vis authorship, so that they treat the author's voice as if it might be their own voice. Thus, readers engage a reading method and reading attitude that *would be appropriate for reading their own work*.

In summary, our discussion suggests an ethic of reading that is founded upon the author being a subject, whose 'voice' is not wholly reducible to any form of determinism. This means that the author is not an object, and should not be treated as such: her voice is not fully reducible to existing cultural objects, psychological laws, economic systems, gender ideology, and so on. Her strangeness and otherness is not even reducible to the sameness of 'myself-as-reader.' Because the author is a subject, she has an intrinsic value. Indeed, her value is equal to my own value, so that the *Thou-as-author* should be treated as of equal value to the *Thou-as-myself*. Her voice, as a reproduction of her subjectivity, deserves to be treated with the same respect that I would use for my own voice. Positively, this means giving the author a space within which to be heard, though we have not yet posited how this is done. Negatively, it means refusing to knowingly manipulate, marginalize, or silence that voice.

When we add Kant's imperative, we get the notion of treating the voice of the author, at least initially, as an end in itself. This principle functions as a side restraint on interpretive desires and methods, not dictating which to use, but only which ones cross into problematic territory. Another side restraint comes from Rawls' work, where readers read as if they do not know who wrote the text, so that they treat any text as if it might be their own.

Upon proposing these principles, we must immediately turn to a series of problems. The first problem is created by a contradiction with the conclusions of Chapter 4. There we stated that the reader always approaches the text with a desire, which uses the raw elements of the text in an instrumental way for its own fulfillment. But here we state that instrumental uses are problematic. *This might suggest that readers should attempt to eliminate their desires*, and approach the text—as Matthew Arnold suggested—with a studied disinterestedness.⁴⁵ But this is an error. The point is not to eliminate desire,

45 Matthew Arnold advocated reading from a disinterested position, by "steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas . . . which

which is quite impossible as it breaks with the structure of ‘reading as an intentional act.’ Rather, the solution is to approach with a desire that fits within the restraints of our ethic of reading.⁴⁶ This notion functions best as a side restraint for ethical interpretation, not dictating which desires to utilize, but rather which ones cross into problematic territory.

So, for example, approaching a biblical parable with the desire to find ‘literal (non-metaphorical) meaning,’ shows that the reader’s primary interest is in developing a particular kind of meaning, which is very different from valuing the author as a subject. This reader will not follow the parable’s design as ‘an extended metaphor,’ despite the broad intersubjective agreement over this form. Indeed, in reading the *Parable of the Weeds* (Mt 13:24–30), this reader would have to ignore the opening statement: “The Kingdom of Heaven *may be compared to* someone who sowed good seed in his field.” Such a move uses the text in a way that clearly violates the cultural design of ‘parables,’ as located in the literary institutions of the intended audience.⁴⁷

This is also the case for method. As noted above, the reader’s desire always selects and utilizes some method for reading, and that method instrumentally uses the text to reproduce its basic assumptions from the raw elements of the text. This might suggest that the goal is to eliminate method, and so its assumptions. Here one might consider Heidegger’s suggestion: “To gain access to the work, it would be necessary to remove it from all relations to something other than itself, in order to let it stand on its own for itself alone.”⁴⁸ But this is an error. The point is not to eliminate method, which is quite impossible (see below). Rather, it is to utilize an approach which is grounded in the assumptions that the text is—at least in part—the author’s voice, that this voice has value, and that this voice is partially recoverable. Again, this functions as a side

criticism has really nothing to do with” (“The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch [New York: W.W. Norton, 2001], 814–815).

46 We have attempted to simplify this problem by positing only a single reader desire, though, in fact, most readers approach with many desires. We might suggest that the central desire be subjected to this analysis. See Chapter 8, where second readings, as tied to other desires and interests, are proposed.

47 On the “literary institution,” cf. Harvey McArthur and Robert Johnston, *They Also Taught in Parables* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990).

48 Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 167. Note, here, that Heidegger does recognize that the revelation of being (disclosedness) only occurs in a historical context—and thus is subject to one’s historicity (a form of presupposition; *ibid.*, 167). So he states that in a work of art, one must “go into the activity of the artist” (*ibid.*, 179). Nevertheless, outside of this historical binding, he wants to reject other methods of controlling (enframing) the meaning of the text.

restraint for ethical interpretation, not dictating which method to use, but only which ones cross into problematic territory. So, for example, an approach that only conceives of the text as an ideological reproduction of some cultural element is rendered problematic . . . at least as the initial reading.

This brings up the point, which we will discuss in Chapter 8, that these ethical issues only apply to the initial reading. Second readings may well come from different desires and use different methods, and as such constitute further 'voices' in the processes of interpretation. But these come after the author is allowed her voice, so as to value the author-as-subject prior to critiquing her ideas, and so as to create the type of meaning that is worthy of critique.

The second problem is that the text often attempts to convince and even manipulate the reader, so that the author's voice appears to be 'not respecting' the reader! Booth gets at this when he writes:

There is a sharp difference between authors who imply that we readers are essentially their equals in the imaginative enterprise . . . and those who suggest that we are either their inferiors or their superiors . . .⁴⁹

We begin this discussion by making a distinction between 'convincing' and 'manipulating.' Here we follow Habermas, who ties this distinction to models for social coordination, the former to a 'communicative model' and the latter to a 'strategic model.' The strategic model is based on a subject-object relation, where one's fundamental interest is in 'success,' that is, in achieving one's own ends by any means necessary, including treating the other as an object for manipulation and coercion. In its most coarse form, this degenerates into propaganda, which uses 'rhetorical tricks' (fallacies of argument) in order to impose one's agenda (dogma, economic product, political will) upon the receiver. On the other hand, the communicative model is based on a subject-subject relation, where one's fundamental interest is in 'understanding,' that is, in "the type of interaction in which *all* participants harmonize their individual plans of action with one another . . ."⁵⁰ White summarizes this distinction: "It is simply a way of reading the difference between treating another person as something like an object versus treating him/her as something like an end in itself, worthy of some sort of respect."⁵¹

49 Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 184.

50 Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 294; author's italics.

51 Stephen White, *The Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 45; on a comparison of Habermas' discourse ethics to Kant, see *Ibid.*, 48–49.

For an ethic of reading, this suggests that readers make a distinction in their approach to the text, based on the type of model used by the text. The opening problem, then, is in distinguishing between texts based on a strategic model vs. a communicative model. Perhaps the easiest example of the strategic model is the cigarette commercial. As the audience is watching, they become aware that the commercial is creating a narrative 'about' how smoking enriches one's life. But the commercial is duplicitous, for it also states: "The surgeon general has determined that smoking is hazardous to one's health." At this point, the audience recognizes a disjunction between the actual message (smoking is enriching) and the ostensible message (smoking is hazardous). Careful evaluation reveals that the commercial is designed to minimize the actual information (smoking is hazardous), by getting the audience to focus on the emotional and kinesthetic content (you will never 'find love' or 'be your own man' until you smoke two packs a day). The commercial is internally dialogic, but the dominant 'voice' attempts to suppress the linguistic voice, so as to keep genuine polyphony from occurring.

This gets to the purposeful design of the commercial: to convince the audience to buy cigarettes by using implicit connections, emotional content, and archetypal images, all the while suppressing the actual outcomes (hazards). This is not a narrative designed for understanding, but for manipulation, and it should be treated as such. This approach fits nicely within the ethical boundaries we've outlined: our model reader's desire is to hear the actual voice of the author (the advertising agency), and so applies an interpretive method appropriate to achieve this end.

The third problem is that the reader, who treats the author's work as he treats his own work, may despise his own work. He may evaluate everything he writes as worthless, and so suggests that he can treat another's voice to that same evaluation. But this only occurs when readers begin with our fourth principle ("subjects of equal value should treat each other as subjects of equal value"). When readers begin with the opening principles (humans are subjects, humans have intrinsic value, this value is not based on their acts), this position becomes untenable, for readers can no longer so devalue their own works. They may evaluate their work as superficial or misconceived, but they cannot affix the word 'worthless' or 'of no value' to their own voice.

The fourth problem is that an ethic of reading suggests a 'should' as attached to principles and duty, though these terms are largely out of favor. Indeed, these terms suggest, on the one hand, a mindless devotion to the author, and on the other, a restricting of the reader's freedom and creativity. As to the former issue, however, even the most 'literalist' readings of a text are far from 'mindless devotion.' The creation of themes and meanings, from

the many disparate elements of the text, requires considerable abstraction and synthesis. It is, metaphorically, like working on a gigantic puzzle, where one must first create the pieces and then try fitting these together. Solving this puzzle is not a matter of 'passively' following someone else's thought process, but actively constructing and synthesizing, weighing evaluative statements and values, and navigating conflicting themes. Such is no less creative than using the text to follow one's own thoughts . . . they are simply different types of creative processes.

As to the latter issue, Harpham has shown that critical schools routinely engage in method, principles, and duty, though such is generally disguised by their rejection of this terminology. He summarizes: "Any particular conception of the act of criticism includes some specification of a proper procedure or methodology—a critical duty—and some account of the transgression."⁵² He then selects Barthes for special consideration, given Barthes' focus on the freedom of the reader:

Even those critics who advocate, in Roland Barthes' phrase, the 'pleasures of the text,' outline some principle of duty . . . For Barthes, the reader ought to permit his or her subjective experience to flourish, and ought not indulge in any arbitrary fantasies of stable form.⁵³

Harpham even shows how deconstruction, while opposed to traditional ethical terms, still has "an ethical imperative" in the work of scholars such as de Man, Miller, and Derrida.

Locating the Text: The Reader-Text Relation

Having outlined our ethic of reading, we now turn these principles to the opening steps of reading. When readers open a book, they find marks on the page. Initially, readers are under no obligation to locate these in any particular language or culture. Indeed, readers recognize—from Chapter 4—that reading is a form of readerly reproduction: readers reproduce the object of their desire, the assumptions of their method, the location of their culture, and the

⁵² Geoffrey Harpham, "Ethics and Literary Criticism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 381–382.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 382–383.

newness of their own subjectivity. If this were the whole story of reading, then any notion of 'the author's voice' would be absurd, and engaging an ethic of reading would be pointless. But in Chapter 4 we also noted that a fourth type of meaning was possible, which we called 'design-based meaning.'

Design-based meaning begins to emerge when readers recognize and follow the designs that the author instantiated in the text. We have already noted that certain designs are 'in' the text and can be validated by intersubjective agreement. For example, all can agree that Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was written in English, and not German or Spanish, and further that it was written in Middle English and not Modern English. Indeed, all can come to agreement over many of the literary designs: that it has such and such a set of characters, which interact in a particular way to form the plot. This analysis goes down to one's recognition of themes, as well as issues of character bonding and perspective. *Indeed, it is the reader's recognition of these constructs that forms the basis for 'resistant readings.'* After all, it is only by recognizing the design of patriarchy, that feminist readers have a design 'in the text' to resist.

To this point, we have restricted our example to a 21st century American audience. Audiences from a different culture might recognize a different cultural design for these same elements. Our point is not that a collection of elements suggests the same design for every possible world, but only that each world will recognize some design. The question to ask, then, is not if the text is wholly open, for the presence of a limited collection of elements will always suggest a limited number of designs (see our examples in the opening sections of Chapter 2). Rather, the question is *which culture to use in constructing those designs*. At its most basic level, the question is about which culture to use in locating a text's opening elements (alphabet, words, syntax).

Here our ethic of reading steps in. When readers begin to read, they create a *reader-text relation* which is contoured by their originating desire and selected method. These generally guide what readers create out of the raw elements of the text, so that readers reproduce the object of their desire and the assumptions of their method. But if this reader is following our ethic of reading, then a central desire is to 'give the author her voice,' and this desire both selects certain interpretive moves and places side restraints upon others. For example, it restrains an initial reading which brings the text "into contradiction with itself, opening its intended meaning . . . onto an alterity which goes against what the text wants to say or mean."⁵⁴ On the other hand, it selects interpretive moves

54 Simon Critchley and Timothy Mooney, "Deconstruction and Derrida," in *Continental Philosophy in the 20th Century*, ed. Richard Kearney, Routledge History of Philosophy, vol. 8 (London: Routledge, 1994), 446.

that are oriented towards communication. One such move involves using the same set of language conventions as the author, as guided by the implicit social contract of communication (Chapter 5). This means engaging in the process of locating the text's elements in the culture of the intended audience. But how does one do this?

At the lowest level of complexity, readers see the opening marks on the page and make an initial guess about the design—in this case, the design of the language itself. Readers recognize a particular alphabet, vocabulary, and grammar, and so assume that the author utilized a particular language. This is the opening recognition that an author-text relation exists, and that it can be characterized. After making an initial guess about the language design, readers apply this guess to the following words of the text. Technically, they choose to accept the role of a non-resistant reader to the language design that they 'found' in the text. In doing so, they are taking on the role of the implied reader, which they are also constructing from the text.

Readers continue down this path until they accumulate sufficient material to make a guess about the designs at the next level of complexity. These are likely to be literary designs (e.g., this is a narrative with characters and plot, and not a lecture or a grocery list). In other words, the initial guess, about language design, is used to construct the materials for the next guess, about literary designs. The central point, here, is that our model reader begins the reading process by turning to the author: *our reader engages the text by taking account of the author-text relation*. So how does the author-text relation work?

Locating the Text: The Author-Text Relation

The author-text relation is characterized by the author's selection and use of a particular set of linguistic and literary designs, as located within some culture. Now the author could locate her words, cultural practices, and understanding of the world in any number of possible worlds, each with its own social institutions, cognitive maps, and symbolic universe. But authors generally design their texts for a particular historical audience. Authors utilize the conventions and institutions of that audience—they reproduce these in the text—and they expect their audiences to use the same. In technical language, the author designs her texts for a historical audience (the intended audience), which she represents in her mind (the authorial audience), and then adopts a writing role which utilizes those conventions (implied authorA) in the expectation that the reader will use the same (function as a member of her intended audience). Such is an application of the implicit social contract of communication,

namely that both persons attempt to utilize the same set of linguistic and literary conventions, as indexed to a particular cultural moment.

But this implicit social contract is based on a yet deeper assumption, namely that *the author desires to be understandable*. As Davidson quips: "In speaking or writing we intend to be understood."⁵⁵ Without this assumption, the author could just as easily have written in a private language, with private conventions shared by no audience. Of course, it is impossible to write in a totally private language, as defined by Wittgenstein. The very act of writing commits the person to certain cultural (intersubjective) conventions, such as the convention that words are for 'reading,' and not for 'shaving' or 'riding.' This is simply a reiteration of our notion that the author (implied authorA) reproduces her culture (what one does with 'words') in her acts of writing, and expects her readers (intended audience) to do the same. Nevertheless, an author could attempt to reproduce so much subjective/private newness, that her designs could not be grasped beyond the generalities of 'designed for reading.' This would be Humpty Dumpty's language taken to the extreme. But all of this changes when the author engages in the intentional act of 'publishing.'

Writing and publishing are separate intentional acts. We have already examined how writing originates in an intentional state: the writer desires to say/do something. Publishing originates in a different intentional state: the writer desires to communicate something (though a network of other desires may be present). These two intentional states, and the behaviors to which they give rise, are not always co-terminus. Writing behavior is about 'saying something,' but this is not necessarily connected to notions of communication or understanding. For example, a writer might desire to say something that she wants to keep private, as it is only for her own use. In this case the author might engage in writing a diary, with secret marks and code words that only she knows. But publishing behavior is about 'communication directed towards some audience.' This author would not engage in secret marks and code words.

55 David Davidson, "James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty," in *Truth, Language, and History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 147. The structure of "understandable" is quite complex (cf. Grice's conversational maxims and implicature). Here we are only addressing that component which deals with shared language conventions, as located in common cultural institutions. Davidson kicks against the notion of "conventions," citing passages from James Joyce about his neologisms and verbal puns, and concluding: "But then one should wonder what philosophers and linguists mean when they say that speaking and writing are 'rule-governed' activities" (Ibid., 152). I agree that language is not wholly rule-governed or conventional, but the primary way of grasping neologisms is by having *sufficient conventional language surrounding the neologism that its use can be inferred* (this process is detailed in Chapter 7).

Indeed, the author who desires to keep something private, as in a diary, would not engage in publishing behavior in the first place.⁵⁶

On the other hand, consider the author who desires to say something to all English readers of the 21st century. This author might engage in writing behavior that utilizes a relatively dialect-free form of Modern English, and engage in publishing behavior that is oriented towards a near-global market. Her desire creates the design for her writing and publishing behavior.

Let us consider one final situation, where the writer desires to say something, but with the restriction of only being understandable by a particular group. In this case the author would engage in a different type of writing behavior (e.g., writing with a code that is only known by the target audience), and orient her publishing behavior to a regional market (where these select few live). An example might be a spy's coded message in a newspaper article, which is designed for a small subset of the reading public. A biblical example might include *The Revelation to John*, which contains a code-like language for the persecuted Christian community. The point is that publishing behavior originates in the author's desire for communication and understanding, though the level and extent of this 'understanding' may vary widely. Publishing behavior 'means' that the author *attempts to conform her text to the abstract notions of 'communicable' and 'understandable' for her intended audience.*

Further, these abstract concepts are instantiated in the text, as part of the design of the text. This is most easily seen in our example of a code, where the author begins with the desire to be understandable only by a particular group. This intentional state is used to create a design for the text, which is concretized as a code that only the select few know. Here 'understandable' means shared conventions on how to identify and read the code. Additionally, the author desires for her meaning to be opaque to all other readers, and so instantiates the design of 'non-understandable' or 'deceptive' in the text. Her conditions of satisfaction are met when she both understands her text (by reading as her intended audience) and does not understand her text (by reading as the general public).

This discussion brings out two central notions. The first is that the author, who engages in publishing, desires to be understandable by an intended audience. This means that the author, functioning as an implied authorA, generally utilizes the linguistic and literary conventions of the authorial audience—as her approximation of the intended audience—in constructing the 'something' of the text. The second is that writing for an intended audience means that all texts are designed for a limited audience, and not for all readers of all

56 This brings up certain ethical issues in the public use of truly private materials (e.g., publishing an author's diaries).

times. 'Language use' functions like a code, in that it is always indexed to a particular cultural moment. Readers from all other speech-times and speech-communities approach the text as strangers. Still, most authors assume that their language is understandable to all readers. None open their text with the disclaimer: "This narrative is designed only for readers in culture xyz, living at time xyz." The author of *Beowulf* likely thought the same.

In order to understand the text, then, our reader needs to locate the words in the corresponding cultural moment of the intended audience. Only this cannot be done by simply using a dictionary, as such fails to address the cultural institutions that locate usage. Consider the notion of 'patriarchy' in 19th and 21st century American culture.⁵⁷ In both centuries, the dictionary might define the word as: a hierarchical system of male dominance characterized by the structural use of power. Indeed, the uses might appear to be identical. But definitions are an abstraction of usage, as if 'meanings' floated free of their cultural moorings and social institutions. Usage is attached to social institutions within a culture, and this location governs a word's usage.⁵⁸ To understand 'patriarchy,' the word must be located in the social institutions of its time. So the 21st Century reader might locate patriarchy in the socio-economic institutions which keep women out of the top jobs (the 'glass ceiling') and which pay women less for the same work (the 'Susan B. Anthony dollar'). But a reader of the 19th century would more likely locate patriarchy in the institutions which denied women the vote, which kept them out of the workplace, and which denied them access to higher learning. The abstraction of each set does result in a common definition for 'patriarchy,' and may even be supported by a common symbolic universe, *but the modern use cannot account for the death of Edna in the 19th century text, "The Awakening."* Indeed, applying the modern use creates a disjunction in reading that text.

Unfortunately, one never has full access to the social institutions of another time and place. The 21st century Western reader can never fully engage the 1st century Eastern culture of the *Gospel of Matthew*. A few have taken this to the extreme, and stated that the reader has no access to a foreign culture's institutions. But this is to suggest that the human is incapable of recognizing and understanding otherness, and so is incapable of genuine learning. Again we turn to subjectivity, which is not only the capacity to create newness, but

57 Note that 19th century language did not have this word, though the concept was certainly present.

58 This was an insight of Wittgenstein: "By noticing the strong connection between a language game and a form of life, between language and social practice, the later Wittgenstein no longer privileged only the representational function of language" (Gary Simpson, *Critical Social Theory* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], 79–80).

also—using the specialized processes outlined in Chapter 3—to grasp newness. The reader can not only assimilate a paradigm shift, a new metaphor, and a defamiliarized passage, but also the ‘newness’ of a different culture. So we have the academic disciplines of historical sociology and cultural anthropology.

Indeed, locating a document in a different cultural moment is routinely done. A central example occurs in our legal system, in the adjudication of a will. A will is written in a particular cultural moment, and this can be characterized by a particular set of language conventions (word uses, grammatical constructions, literary forms, etc.). No matter how these conventions change across time, the activation of a will requires that the reader (beneficiary, executor) uses the language conventions of the originating cultural moment. Thus, the interpretation of a will not only suggests a similar set of interpretive principles, but even that such principles can be made to work *in ways to which all parties can generally agree*. The cultural conventions of another time are not so ‘other’ as to be permanently closed, as if linkages did not exist or humans were incapable of overcoming distance. Indeed, modern readers with a post-Enlightenment worldview have no significant difficulty in grasping the spiritual causation employed in biblical miracle stories, or the fear created in ‘demonic affliction’ stories.

A pertinent example of cross-cultural communication occurs in the employment of an international treaty with mutual verifiability conditions. Here both sides agree to certain behaviors, from their respective points of view, and then check to see if the other side is doing the same. Only this latter aspect means that each side checks the behavior of the other side: the ‘verifier’ from the one culture checks the behavior of the other culture, *to see if they are keeping that treaty from the verifier’s perspective—her understanding—of the treaty*. When both sides agree that the treaty’s provisions are being kept, genuine communication is shown to have occurred across cultures, or at least sufficient communication to allow for behavioral verification. While readers can never fully know the social institutions of another time and place, they are capable of recognizing and assimilating otherness, so that this theoretical barrier is only partial (for more on this, see *Excursus* below).

Thus, we have suggested that readers begin by taking account of the author-text relation. The author-text relation is characterized by the author’s intentional acts which, for a published text, include the abstract notion of ‘understandable by the intended audience,’ so that this relation defines the horizon for historicist issues of location.⁵⁹ Readers take account of the

59 Cf. Paul Hamilton: “Historicist criticism . . . takes as its subject those present prejudices or assumptions by which such historical critics decide that something is indeed historically

author-text relation by recognizing the conventions used and locating them in the appropriate culture. This sets three tasks before our model readers: first they need to identify the intended audience, second they need to develop competency in that audience's public language, and third they need to use that language for their time in the story-world. As public language is indexed to a particular cultural moment, this also means developing a familiarity with, and accepting at temporarily valid, that culture's social institutions, symbolic universe, cognitive maps, and the like.

Stated negatively, our model readers do not locate the language of the text in their own culture. Such results in a distortion of the author's voice, and, indeed it creates a different voice altogether.⁶⁰ The reader locates the 'ghost' of *Hamlet* in late 16th century English culture, where ghosts were the return of the dead, but not in post-enlightenment culture, where ghosts are a figment of an overactive imagination. Similarly, when this reader approaches the *Gospel of Matthew*, he locates 'illness' in the Jewish 1st century symbolic universe, where such disorders were often the result of spiritual powers. Our ethical reader begins with these author-text relations, as if they were the conditions under which reading occurs.

Communication

This notion, of turning to the author-text relation, goes to the issue of how the author communicates with the reader. As we saw in Chapter 2, writing is an intentional act, where the author has an about-ness that she wishes to communicate to the reader, and it is this desire which causes her to pick up a pen in the first place. She also considers the audience to which she is writing, her

relevant" ("Historicism and Historical Criticism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 21).

60 The notion of 'distortion' suggests that some standard exists, to which any interpretation may be compared. The standard, in our system, is not "what the author meant to say," as this is epistemically private. Rather, it is tied to the author's intentional acts, and may be formulated as: "What the intended audience who takes account of the author-text relation would have constructed." Thus, if a meaning is probable for the intended audience, it is defined by our model reader as "not a distortion." Of course, the intended audience is not a uniform entity, so that they would have constructed a range of meanings, but this is still a limiting standard: it does not allow for all meanings in every possible world, but a limited number for this particular world.

authorial audience, and creates an implied author^A in order to communicate to them. This results in an interested narrative, where the author attempts to convince her audience of the validity of her meaning (or of some intentional object). In this way narratives, along with the type of argument they utilize, tend to function as propaganda (in a neutral sense). The author is not impartial in her presentation of meaning, but does so in such a way as to convince the reader of a particular solution. Indeed, she puts forward her meaning as the only successful solution (other solutions in the story-world fail, often in a straw-man type of argument), and forecloses reasoned discussion over other options.⁶¹

Of course, there are degrees here. Propaganda, in its purest form, is designed for manipulation, and so uses language strategically in order to move its readers about like so many chess pieces, even the point of acting against their own interests. Consider our earlier example of the cigarette commercial, where the ostensible meaning (smoking is hazardous) is suppressed, and the event meaning (you will never find love until you smoke) is proclaimed so as to convince the audience to buy this or that brand. Most narratives, and certainly the biblical narratives, are not oriented by such crass strategic mechanisms. But, at the same time, narratives are not a propositional discussion over a problem. The more gracious evaluation is that their authors designed them to be dialogic, so as to involve the readers in a broader discussion, and so they use language for communication—and even convincing communication—but not manipulation.

The other side of the communication model is between the text and the reader. There is a tendency to assume that readers approach the text as any other object in the world, such as a rock or a chair. The assumption is that readers approach the text from some theoretical neutral space, without assumptions, unaffected by the biases of culture and method, and so capable of creating textual truth. We have already shown the problems with such an analysis: readers approach the text with a desire and from an enculturated position, they read under the assumptions of some method, and they participate in the co-creation of the narrative world.

Given these various problems, it is surprising that communication from the author to the reader can occur at all. However, one place to begin the discussion on communication is at the level of the implied reader, for it is here that the reader attempts to discern the demands of the author, so that author and reader are using the same language and beliefs. For example, if the author

61 Open texts and polyphonic texts are designed to convince the reader that meaning is not fixed, and do so in a way that forecloses discussion on the 'closed-ness' of texts.

writes a fantasy, the reader can only read the text as fantasy if he chooses to believe that magical causation occurs. Similarly, if the author writes about demons as the actual (not satirical or ironic) cause of convulsions (Mark 1:16), the reader can only read the text as an 'actual happening' if he also accepts that demons cause convulsions.

The assumption, here, is that readers may always read from some interested position, but that they can only understand the text if they begin with the text's position, that is, the biases and beliefs that it tends to assume. So Fowler states that the "implied reader is the reader we must be willing to become . . . in order to experience the narrative in the fullest measure."⁶²

The problem with Fowler's statement is the motivation of "in order to experience the narrative in the fullest measure." This is a rather subjective notion, as tied to the value system of the actual reader. Some readers would consider this value problematic, as it forces them to assume ideological positions that are damaging (e.g., reading a racist or patriarchal text). Others would not recognize this as the highest value, as they value a more active and creative 'playing' with the text. Consequently, we will ground the notion of reading as the implied reader, not in the type of experience ('the fullest measure'), but in ethics (treating the author as a Thou). In order to evaluate this suggestion, we must first dig deeper into the way communication occurs, beginning with the construct of the 'implied reader.'

Kingsbury states that the implied reader is "an imaginary person who is to be envisaged . . . as responding to the text at every point with whatever emotion, understanding, or knowledge the text ideally calls for."⁶³ As Powell notes, this requires for the reader "to know everything that the text assumes the reader knows and to 'forget' everything that the text does not assume the reader knows."⁶⁴ The implied reader is a textual construct (a projection in the text) that is used to suggest a role/attitude for the actual reader. It may be convenient to think of the implied reader as a manifestation of relatively fixed conventions in the text, so that each actual reader recognizes the same demands in the text, and so forms the same implied reader—and in this way the author (implied authorA) is able to communicate to all readers alike. If the text has a story about demons causing illness, then the implicit expectation is of a reader

62 Robert Fowler, *Let The Reader Understand* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 33.

63 Jack Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2nd. ed., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 38. This is the 'narrow' view of the implied reader; other theorists define the implied reader more broadly.

64 Mark Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 20; addressing Kingsbury's work.

who ‘believes’ in demonic causation. Generally, there is a single implied reader for each text, though a rare text may have more than one reader in view, and so have multiple implied readers.⁶⁵

Using these constructs, narrative critics created a communication model, where the extra-textual author communicates to an extra-textual reader, through a variety of intra-textual features (implied author, narrator, narratee, implied reader).⁶⁶ In this model, the reader uses the text to construct the implied reader, as the kind of reader that the text seems to require. This is of value to readers, for it addresses which cultural elements they need to accept for their time in the story-world. In this model, the reader also constructs an implied author (our implied authorR). From the reader’s viewpoint, the author may create the text, but the reader neither ‘sees’ nor takes account of the actual author. Rather, the reader brackets the actual author, and creates a version of the author that he finds in the text, as a “selecting, structuring, and presiding intelligence . . .”⁶⁷ This is of worth to readers, for it addresses “the reader’s need to know where, in the world of values, he stands—that is, to know where the author wants him to stand.”⁶⁸ Further, it is useful in creating “a protective shield” between the actual author’s values, and the implied authorR’s values, so that the reader does not import the former into a text which was designed to manifest the latter.⁶⁹ Finally, it is a necessary fiction in order to ground the notion that the text is written with the language of the intended audience, and not necessarily that of the actual author (she may write to a different speech community than her own). In this model, communication is expected to occur

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- 65 Brian Richardson concludes: “I believe that the presence of multiple implied readers in a single text is a fairly rare phenomenon and should not be confused with other, more familiar kinds of ambiguous, polysemous, or multivocal texts (“Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers,” *Style* 41, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 267, accessed May 13, 2014, Academic Search Complete EBSCOhost. According to Richardson, even polyphonic novels—in the sense offered by Bakhtin—with its “multiple voice, jargons, and perspectives imply a protean but ultimately single implied reader . . .” (Ibid., 268).
- 66 For an explication of this model and its variants, see Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), Chapter 7.
- 67 Stephen Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 46.
- 68 Wayne Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 73.
- 69 Marie-Laure Ryan, “Meaning, Intent, and the Implied Author,” *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 36, accessed May 13, 2014, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost. While Ryan rejects the necessity of an implied author, her characterization of the issues is excellent.

when the implied author and the implied reader—as manifestations of the text—line up, and the actual reader engages these without resistance.⁷⁰

However, there are problems with this system. First, the construction of the implied reader requires that actual readers stand in some neutral space, free from their own cultural influences, so that they can adequately evaluate the demands of the text.⁷¹ These assumptions are dubious, as all readers, by definition, are caught in the stream of effective history and cultural conditioning.⁷² Tull nicely summarizes, using Bakhtin's work to critique the notion of a culturally isolated, textual construct:

In other words, Bakhtin accuses literary critics of assuming that when readers read, communication proceeds in a simple direct, and uniform line from text to reader: The reader does not protest against or contribute insights to the text, no other texts are appealed to by the text or recalled by the reader, and the text itself is the only influence on the reader's interpretation.⁷³

Second, the implied reader suffers from limitations, as this construct is confined to the text at hand, from which the implied reader is derived.⁷⁴ This is especially problematic in two areas. To begin with, it cannot uniformly account for the gaps in the text, which readers must fill without the help of the text, so that the implied reader now becomes a combination of textual projection

70 In a similar way, Booth suggests that "... the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader can find complete agreement" (Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 138). He also addresses the notion of resistance: "... the divorce between my ordinary self and the selves I am willing to become as I read is not complete ... we will find many books that postulate readers we refuse to become ..." (Ibid.).

71 Wolfgang Iser writes: "He embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effects ... not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself" (*The Act of Reading* [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978], 34).

72 Powell appropriately notes the danger: "Descriptions of ideal implied readers, furthermore, are always offered by actual readers and will inevitably reflect the particular interests or conditioning of the latter" (*What is Narrative Criticism*, 20).

73 Patricia Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality," in *To Each Its Own Meaning*, rev. ed. Stephen McKenzie and Stephen Haynes (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 167.

74 So Robert Fowler notes that Iser is "limiting himself to the reader implied by any one text" ("Who is 'The Reader' in Reader Response Criticism," *Semeia* 31 [1985], 16). Cf. William Nelles, "Historical and Implied Authors and Readers," *Comparative Literature*, 45, no. 1 (Winter 1993), 32.

and personal experience.⁷⁵ In addition, it tends to segregate the text from its broader context (political, economic, literary, religious), so that these textual elements lack the underpinnings which gave them meaning in the first place. So Merenlahti and Hakola note that a formal analysis “falls fatally short of what is required for understanding those texts as writings that have been shaped by the ideas, attitudes and conditions of a particular historical movement.”⁷⁶ This is similar to our example of the word ‘patriarchy,’ which may have a similar abstract use in different centuries, but with very different locations in their respective social institutions.

Third is the problem of circularity. Circularity occurs because readers use the text to construct the implied author and implied reader, and then use these constructs as roles for reading the text. This suggests that the controlling factor is not the text and its constructs (implied author, implied reader), but the mystified assumptions with which readers initially constructed the implied author and implied reader. This does not mean that the text is wholly the product of the reader, but only that the notion of some pure communication ‘from’ an author ‘to’ a reader is deeply compromised.

Because of these problems, the implied reader has been subject to many revisions, such as Fowler’s “ideal reader,” Fish’s “informed reader,” Riffaterre’s “superreader,” Eco’s “model reader,” and the like.⁷⁷ In most of these, the goal is to gain competencies appropriate to a specific culture, as identified by cultural markers in the text, and to use these as the conditions under which reading occurs.⁷⁸ In other words, *this construct is created from outside of the particular text prior to reading, and then modified by the particular text in the act of reading.* As this construct is created from outside competencies, it is the reader’s grasp of these that is controlling for interpretation: they constitute the primary context under which reading occurs.

75 Cf. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels*, 101–102.

76 Petri Merenlahti and Raimo Hakola, “Reconceiving Narrative Criticism,” in *Characterization in the Gospels*, ed. David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 45.

77 On these constructs, from each of their authors, see: Fowler, “Who is ‘The Reader,’” 15; Stanley Fish, “Literature in the Reader,” in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 86–87; Michael Riffaterre, “Describing Poetic Structures,” in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 38; Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 8.

78 The ideal reader construct has two major uses, one tied to ‘linguistic and literary competencies,’ and the other to ‘critical communities of interpretation’ (cf. Fowler, *Let The Reader Understand*, 38–39). Note that some literary theorists use this ‘ideal reader’ as their ‘implied reader.’

We will define our ideal reader as located by the linguistic and literary competence of the intended audience.⁷⁹ This is similar to Fish's informed reader, who is "a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built up," that possesses a mature "semantic knowledge" and has "literary competence."⁸⁰ As language is indexed to a particular cultural moment, this means that our ideal reader also has competence as it relates to that moment's symbolic universe, cognitive maps, social institutions, and social practices: these are the places where those linguistic and literary elements are located. Such includes, for example, that culture's understanding of physics (e.g., theory of causation), psychology (e.g., theory of the self), economics (e.g., what a "denarius" is worth), and the like.

Authors generally assume this context when writing, and so do not detail, for example, how a windstorm comes about (physical processes as opposed to magical processes). They assume that any reader from the intended audience will already know this.⁸¹ In other words, the ideal reader—as a combination of competences—is not initially tied to 'texts,' but to the culture for which these texts appear to have been designed (the intended audience).

This shift, from implied reader to ideal reader, suggests a slightly different communication model. As before, the extra-textual author communicates to the extra-textual reader, through a variety of intra-textual features. However, here readers do not begin by reading for narrative content (plot, character, tone, etc.), but to identify the intended audience, for which these various competencies need developed.⁸² To put this in our earlier terminology, readers use the elements of the text to make an initial guess as to the culture for which the text was designed. For example, Levinson uses the text of *The Brothers Karamazov* to propose the following audience:

Dostoyevsky's intended audience . . . would be something on this order: competent readers of Russian, practiced in narrative fiction, aware of Russian history, familiar with Russian religious traditions, and so on.⁸³

79 Some critics use this as their 'implied reader' or 'ideal implied reader.' We are keeping the two separate, in order to account for the specific critiques noted for the implied reader.

80 Fish, "Literature in the Reader," 86–87.

81 On the other hand, when an author utilizes a cultural violation (e.g., posits magical causation for a modern reader), she will detail how such occurs for the narrative world.

82 In practice, readers usually begin with their existing cultural context, and only turn to consider the intended audience when significant disjunctions are encountered.

83 Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation," 227–228.

This is of value to readers, for it shows the general competencies that they need to develop in reading this text.

However, the ideal reader, at this stage, does not know which elements within each competency are important for this particular text. The ideal reader may develop competencies in the Russian religion, but does not know which religious group to use in reading *The Brothers Karamazov*. Thus, the ideal reader now returns to the text for specificity: the ideal reader responds to textual cues by selecting specific elements from within its competencies, and applying these in reading. These specific elements, when taken together, function as a kind of implied reader, only this one is constructed from both the text and the ideal reader, in a matching of textual cues to cultural structures, so as to result in the co-creation of the implied reader. In short, this implied reader is only quasi-textual.

In this model, communication occurs because the extra-textual and quasi-textual participants all use the same cultural moment, namely the cultural moment of the intended audience. The communicative effort does originate in the actual author, but is encoded through the implied authorA who uses the language conventions of the intended audience, as best she understands them (the authorial audience). The author assumes that the reader will apply the language of the intended audience to the text, and so simply receive her message.

However, the reader's involvement is more complex. Readers begin by inserting themselves into the identification process: they use the opening marks of the text to identify the intended audience. Then they create an ideal reader that approximates the intended audience. Finally, they begin reading, by matching textual cues to cultural structures, in order to construct an implied reading role and an implied authorR. For the reader, communication is assumed to occur when the following four conditions are met: (1) the reader correctly identifies and develops the requisite competences of the intended audience, (2) the reader uses these in coordination with the text to create an implied reader and an implied authorR, (3) the implied reader and the implied authorR line up, and (4) the actual reader engages these constructs without resistance.

For example, modern readers of the *Demon Possessed Boy* (Mk. 9:14–27) recognize that this story arose from 1st century Mediterranean culture. Study of this culture reveals that illness was generally attributed to demonic activity, God's punishment, the effects of sin, or powerful natural substances. These readers now re-approach the text as an ideal reader, who has all of these mechanisms for illness in mind. As they reread the story, they recognize the textual expectation for demonic possession, and so utilize this to construct the implied

reading role, with all of that culture's expectations in regard to demonic possession (fear of death, need for an exorcist, loss of purity, compromised self, etc.). They also recognize that the implied authorR values the Kingdom of God, conceives of this kingdom as at war with the demonic, and structures the narrative to present Jesus as the authoritative enactor of this kingdom. Here the values and beliefs of the implied authorR (values the kingdom of God) line up nicely with the implied reader's narrative experiences (Jesus' exorcism of demons), and *this further textures the reader's understanding of Jesus' exorcism*.

But does this construct, of the ideal reader, help us with the problems outlined for the implied reader? The first problem was that the actual reader was required to stand in some theoretical neutral space in order to evaluate the demands of the text. The origin of the ideal reader does require something like an objective recognition of cultural cues, which readers then match to various audiences in order to identify the intended audience. Some cues are relatively objective and can be verified intersubjectively, as in the identification of a particular alphabet. Others are less so, and some cues are even tied to the experiencing of events in the story-world—the fear and impurity attached to demonic possession. As such occurs from within the story's event, any knowledge so gained is already contaminated: readers 'take in' the events through their existing symbolic universe, cognitive maps, and social institutions.⁸⁴ This renders the process circular, where participants only 'see' the cues allowed by their cultural background, and then use these cues to locate the cultural background (the intended audience).

But there are means of checking on this recognition step. First, the selected audience must meet the criteria that are relatively objective (e.g., it must be a culture that uses the recognized alphabet). Second, the selected culture's institutions must project forward expectations that match those actually found in the text. Social institutions project forward certain expectations of how events 'should' unfold and what 'should' happen next. When the modern reader reads the *Demon Possessed Boy*, he applies the social institution of modern medicine, which assumes physical causation, and so projects the expectation of a physical defect and a physical (chemical) cure. But these expectations are not met by our text, which instead presents a demonic cause and an exorcism. In the end, the sheer volume of disjunctions will cause the reader to reevaluate that guess. While these mechanisms do not result in an objective recognition of cues or connection of cues to a specific culture, they do place side-restraints on the process, and so result in a small set of possible cultures. When this is combined with other methods (e.g., internal and external dating methods,

84 This is similar to the participant-observer problem in anthropological field-work.

cf. Chapter 8), a relatively convincing case can be made for a general cultural characterization for most texts.

After readers have made this semi-objective step of cultural recognition, they construct an ideal reader and begin to read from this perspective. Only this reading is not from a neutral space, but from the culturally biased space for which—it is hoped—the text was designed. In this way, the use of an ideal reader partially redresses the problem of a neutral stance. When this ideal reader is able to apply social institutions that result in a thoroughgoing design, as opposed to a series of major disjunctions, the reader may consider these choices to be partially validated.

The second problem involved the limitations encountered by the implied reader construct, especially for filling the gaps of the text and segregating the text from its broader culture. The ideal reader fares better in both issues. As the ideal reader has competence in the general culture indicated by the text, it fills in gaps from that culture's world. For example, when a text states that "Bob went to town," the means of 'going to town' represents a gap. An implied reader is only required to move Bob to town, and is free to fill this gap with a spaceship or an elephant, while the ideal reader will fill it with an object from the identified culture.

The issue of segregating a textual object from its context also fares better, as the notion of 'competence' is not simply about the identification of some element, but also the structures which lie underneath and give substance to it (sociology of knowledge). When the Lord's Prayer opens with "Our Father," the implied reader would index this term to the 1st century social institution of the family, but the ideal reader would also recognize the underlying structure of patriarchy which relates to an androcentric symbolic universe.

The final problem involved the issue of circularity, where the reader used the text to construct the implied reader, and then used the implied reader role to engage the text. It is clear that the ideal reader begins with textual cues, which are used to identify the cultural moment for which competencies are then developed. Thus, an element of circularity does exist, but with a difference. The implied reader is constructed from single cue types, each type suggesting specific elements 'of' this reading role. The ideal reader begins with *all cue types working in concert to identify the general culture*, and then using cue types to select specific elements from within that culture. While not eliminating circularity, it does attenuate the problem.

The use of an ideal reader, as we have defined it, resolves some of the communication issues that we have raised. However, other communication problems yet remain. We will outline two central issues here, which allow us to suggest a more comprehensive model. The first issue involves a mismatch between the author's and the reader's notion of the implied constructs 'in'

the text. The traditional communication model assumes that the author (our implied authorA) designed her text so that anyone from the intended audience would recognize both the implied author (our implied authorR) and the implied reader (our modified ideal reader) 'in' the text. These constructs would then function as reading instructions, offering roles and values for how the reader actually reads.

However, the reader may not construct those roles in the way that the author expected. The problem is in assuming that the author (implied authorA) utilized the same cultural elements and codes in constructing the text, as those identified by the reader. Nelles is frank on this issue:

The writer 'who chooses . . . to create' this construct (implied author) can never succeed in limiting it to his or her own interpretation because every *historical* reader's reconstruction (from the text) of this *implied* author has the potential to be different from the writer's version.⁸⁵

We might think of this problem using Ricoeur's terminology, where the author utilized cultural background elements (mimesis₁, prefiguration) in constructing the narrative (mimesis₂, configuration).⁸⁶ However, because of the process of distancing, the text may "escape from the finite intentional horizon of its author and transcend the psycho-sociological conditions of its own production."⁸⁷ To the degree this happens, the prefiguring elements that the reader brings necessarily differ from those used by the author. In our terminology, the author's version of the reader (authorial audience) can never be identical with the actual intended audience, and is even at further remove from the ideal reader (which is also modeled on the intended audience).

The second issue involves the notion of 'transmission' itself. Let us begin with the older model of narrative communication, where the extra-textual author creates the text along with its intermediates (implied author, implied reader), and the extra-textual reader simply receives these. Ryan brings out one of the implications of this model, namely that "the reader's personal reactions to the text do not matter, since the RR (real reader) is located outside the

85 Nelles, "Historical and Implied Authors and Readers," 37; first parenthesis mine, second parenthesis is the author's.

86 Gregory Laughery writes that pre-figuration "is that which takes place on the level of cultural tradition (symbol recognition and temporal features) and doing something. Any imitation of human action must first of all have a sense of what is being imitated" (*Living Hermeneutics in Motion* [Lanham: University Press of America, 2002], 111).

87 Mark Maldoon, *On Ricoeur*, Wadsworth Philosopher Series (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2002), 51. Similarly Laughery, *Living Hermeneutics in Motion*, 76.

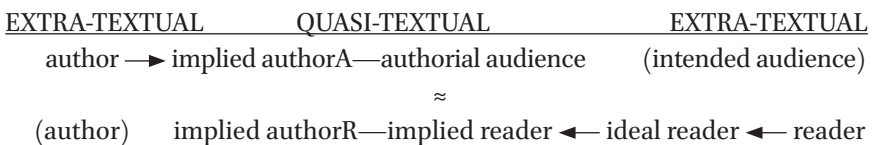
box of literary relevance.”⁸⁸ In this way, communication flows from the author, through the text and its constructs, to the reader. But what this model really identifies is how the author conceives of communication as occurring, or at least how the author hopes it will occur.

However, it fails to address the complexities of the reader who is reading, and especially how the reader participates in the process itself. The issue we just discussed, on the mismatch between the author’s version of the implied constructs and the reader’s version of the same, is a case in point. In short, this model is too simplistic to describe the reader’s side of the communication process. Consequently, we will suggest a slightly more complicated model, which takes account of these entanglement and transmission issues.

The actual author writes using the implied authorA, which is a role she adopts in order to utilize the cultural conventions of her intended audience. Only she does not actually have that audience, but only her mental image of it (the authorial audience), and this determines the conventions that she actually uses. Thus, the author projects forward an image of herself, as contoured by her authorial audience, which is the implied authorA. She uses this role in order to say something (the imaginary) to someone (the intended audience).

On the other hand, our model readers begin reading with their existing culture intact. Upon recognizing textual cues, they make an initial guess about the audience to which the text was written (the intended audience). They then develop competencies in that culture, and use this to contour their ideal reader. As an ideal reader, they reencounter those cues, which now suggest the application of specific elements within those competencies. They use these to construct further guesses, about the literary conventions and social institutions suggested by the text. Taken together, these suggest a specific reading role, which is that of the implied reader. Out of this reading, they recognize a structuring and valuing presence (the implied authorR), which they use to modify the meanings they are developing.

This general plan suggests that communication occurs along two separate lines, one for the author and one for the reader, with some kind of interconnection between them. This may be diagrammed as follows:



⁸⁸ Ryan, “Meaning, Intent, and the Implied Author,” 36; my parenthesis.

This diagram allows us to evaluate how the author and reader work through implied intermediaries. First, the implied authorA and authorial audience are designated as ‘quasi-textual’ structures.⁸⁹ The implied authorA is a role created by the author, in order to address an authorial audience, so that both exist ‘in’ the author’s mind. However, both are also recognizable as textual structures, given that it is their behavior, beliefs, and values that create and constitute the possible world of the story (from the author’s perspective). For the author, these roles are manifested in the production of the text, and in this sense are quasi-textual structures: their effects may be recognized in the text. The case is similar for the implied reader and implied authorR, as both are the result of an interaction between the reader and text, and this interaction is characterized by participation and co-creation. Thus they, too, are quasi-textual.

Next, this diagram reveals that there are no formal connections between the authorial and readerly systems, so that communication itself is never a direct transference. Readers never have direct access to the actual author, implied authorA, or authorial audience that were used in writing. They only have the text as marks on a page, and these initially float free from any particular or individuating context. From these marks, readers will construct textual cues to do all of their work. They must interact with those cues in order to infer the intended audience and construct an ideal reader, and then again interact with those cues in order to create an implied reader and implied authorR.

But there are points of contact between the two systems, and these can be designed so as to facilitate communication. The primary point of contact is between the authorial audience and the implied reader.⁹⁰ On the author’s side, the author communicated through her implied authorA to the authorial audience, *by using the authorial audience as a cipher for her intended audience*. But on the reader’s side, the ideal reader *is also a cipher for the intended audience*, and this construct provides the cultural treasury upon which the implied reader is modeled. As such, the implied reader has a foot in two worlds: it is modeled upon the intended audience (culture) and is individuated by the text (the expectations and demands recognized ‘in’ the text). Because of the

89 Cf. Fowler’s note on Iser: “Iser is careful to say that his implied reader is neither in the text nor outside it, but is the unique product of the ‘interaction’ of a text and a reader” (*Let the Reader Understand*, 34).

90 The other possible node is the: implied authorA—implied authorR. However, the implied authorA is designed to communicate to the authorial audience, and this corresponds (on the reader’s side) to the implied reader, not the implied authorR. Consider the example of reading directions, as located in the notion of genre. Genre is oriented towards the authorial audience (author’s side), but is picked up by the implied reader (reader’s side). It functions for the implied reader, and not for the implied authorR. Rather, the implied authorR is an effect of the application of these directions to the text.

former, communication is theoretically possible, as authorial audience and implied reader are modeled on the same cultural conventions. Because of the latter, communication possibilities are actualized, by the selection of specific linguistic and literary conventions.

To put it another way, the ideal reader is designed with the competencies of the intended audience and recognizes textual cues that call for specific elements within those competencies. As such *it is able to construct an implied reader that bears a correspondence to the authorial audience*. It is across this node, where the message for the authorial audience (cipher for the intended audience) comes to the implied reader (modeled on the intended audience) that communication occurs, provided that the reader accepts this role without resistance.

This model suggests that the voice of the author is never actually heard—there is no direct communication. However, the author designed the text, via the implied authorA, so that her voice could be reconstituted by her authorial audience. Readers can draw near to that authorial audience by assuming the role of the ideal reader/implied reader. In short, they create a congruence between the authorial audience and the implied reader by approximating the intended audience (ideal reader). In such a reading, they can reconstitute the author's voice in a way that resembles the authorial audience's reconstitution of that voice.

This brings us to the critique of our model. The central problem is that the authorial audience is not identical to the implied reader. There are several reasons for this lack of correspondence. Both may be using the same linguistic institutions, but there are problems with language as a medium of complete communication (see Excursus). Both may recognize relatively fixed structures and codes 'in' the text, but these remain tied to each culture's symbolic universe and cognitive maps, which may give different symbolic meanings to these elements. Both author and reader may have a similar concept of the audience, but neither builds their competencies *ex nihilo*, as if from some unenculturated neutral state, but as grasped by and then grafted onto their existing cultural base. Thus each has a 'contaminated' competency with a 'trace' of their original culture. Finally, there is the problem that the implied authorA might be multiple (addressed in Chapter 8). These critiques clearly impact on the notion of 'the voice of the author,' as will be examined below.

Before leaving this section on communication, we need to address what is actually being communicated. The author may place a series of marks upon the page, but this is not what she is communicating. She is communicating events, along with various connectors between the events, evaluative statements about the events, points of view with respect to the events, and the

like. Taken together, these suggest the design she instantiated in the text, in the production of her intentional objects (meanings).

But for flesh-and-blood readers, these events are imaginary: none of these events are actually occurring and none of the literary characters actual exist. The reader cannot state that any 'George Washington' in a biography is actually 'George Washington,' but only a clever fiction that bears a resemblance to the flesh-and-blood figure. The events of the text may be designed to mimic actual events in the 'real' world, as in a history or biography, but the 'real world' is not part of the ontology of the written event. There is only an imagined world that is metaphorically connected to some actual world (i.e., its people, processes, institutions, etc.).

This means that the reader cannot apply his culture's 'normal' use of verification to that story-world. He cannot tap on the story-world's rocks to check on their hardness, or examine the convulsing boy to see if he is, indeed, demon possessed. Indeed, as the text's objects are formed by textual cues which engage the reader's grasp of culture, and as each reader has a somewhat different grasp of culture, the objects are not even reliably reproducible, or at least not identically reproducible. In short, reading does not engage actual, verifiable, or reproducible objects.

Further, the reader—in some capacity—enters the narrative world of those events, so that he is participating 'in' these imagined events. This means, as Iser has noted, that "we are situated inside the literary text . . . instead of a subject-object relationship, there is a moving viewpoint which travels along inside that which it has to apprehend."⁹¹ Poulet is even clearer on the issue: "In short, since everything has become part of my mind thanks to the intervention of language, the opposition between the subject and its objects has been considerably attenuated."⁹²

This 'participatory' element emphasizes that the text is not an external object upon which the reader works. It is not like a rock, which the geologist taps with her hammer in order to obtain data. To use this as an analogy for our participatory model, the reader would have to be part of the rock that he is also tapping. Iser summarizes this nicely:

It is true that they (books) consist of ideas thought out by someone else, but in reading the reader becomes the subject that does the thinking.

⁹¹ Iser, *The Act of Reading*, 109.

⁹² Georges Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 43.

Thus there disappears the subject-object division that otherwise is a prerequisite for all knowledge and all observation, and the removal of this division puts reading in an apparently unique position as regards the possible absorption of new experiences.⁹³

Indeed, each time the text presents something as 'true in the narrative,' the non-resistant reader accepts it as 'true for the story-world' regardless of how 'untrue' it is in the reader's real world. As Lewis notes: "We depart from actuality as far as we must to reach a possible world where the counterfactual supposition comes true."⁹⁴ If the story-world states that demons cause convulsions, the reader will construct an ideal reader who accepts demonic existence and causation, and as an implied reader will apply this throughout the remainder of the text. It is as if the reader 'in' the story-world lacks an executive function, so that the narrative constructs a new person out of the reading-self. So Booth notes that "we have allowed ourselves to become a 'mock reader' whom we cannot respect . . . the beliefs which we were temporarily manipulated into accepting cannot be defended . . ."⁹⁵

As the reader has become part of the process which he is evaluating, he also cannot engage in anything that approaches 'objective critique,' but can only use a form of 'immanent critique,' that is, critique from inside the story-world.⁹⁶ He uses the processes in the story-world as the criterion of evaluation for the events of that story-world. Readers grant these processes and objects temporary existence (for their time in the story-world), even though these objects may not conform to the 'reality' of their actual world. Should the text state that "the kingdom of God has come" (Lk. 11:20) and the "kingdom of God is among you" (Lk. 17:21), then the reader uses this as a criterion to evaluate the

93 Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 66; my parenthesis.

94 David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction," in *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 124. Lewis presents a two-world theory (fiction, real), where "Fictions usually contravene at least some of the community's overt beliefs" (*Ibid.*, 126). Similarly Gregory Currie, "What is Fiction," in *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 134.

95 Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 139.

96 Here 'immanent critique' means critique within a particular system. When a person is 'in' a system, he may use the assumptions of that system or the presentation of that system to evaluate the system that actually exists. Cf. Simpson, *Critical Social Theory*, 56–57.

remainder of the events in the story-world . . . and not outside materials (actual history, authorial biography, etc.).

The point, of this train of thought, is to suggest that the reader (the reading-self) does not stand outside of the story-world, in order to pass judgments about that world. The reader participates in the re-creation of the story-world, even as he is experiencing the event of that story-world. As with immanent critique, he can only evaluate that world by the imaginary rules of that imaginary world, and, indeed, this is the verification process for the story-world. This deeply compromises the Enlightenment notion of objectivity, which requires subjects to utilize sense data of outside objects to form ground truth. As noted earlier, the Enlightenment notions of perception have been problematized in modern philosophy and psychology, but they are even more problematic in narratives, as the only actual 'sense data' are the marks on the page! Data acquired through a character's sight and hearing *are not tied to the verification procedures of human sight and hearing, but to the reliability of the narrator in reporting imaginary events in the imaginary world with imaginary senses*. Such is easily seen when a story employs an unreliable narrator.

So back to our question: what is it that the reader receives in narrative communication? The material that is 'received' does not objectively exist, is not objectively formed, and is not objectively experienced. Readers of fantasy do not believe that a wand will stop a runaway train, any more than they believe that demons cause convulsions or windstorms—even though they do for their time in the narrative, almost as if the reading-self is constituted by the narrative.⁹⁷ Event meaning is neither objective nor propositional in nature, but both imaginary and participatory. So what does this mean when talking about 'the voice of the author'?

First, it means that the implied authorA is not characterized by notions of sincerity, that is, its communication is not necessarily tied to what the author actually believes. Of course, this is why we pose the implied authorA: it is a role that the author creates in order to design possible worlds. As the 'voice of the author' is actually that of the implied authorA, the reading-self has no way of determining the relation of that voice to the actual author. It may or may not be a sincere relation. Determining this would require an evaluation from

97 This goes to the notion of a two-self reading model, with a 'reading-self' inside the story-world, and an 'actual-self' outside; cf. Chapter 5, under Pretend Speech Acts. Walker Gibson calls this the "fictitious reader . . . whose mask and costume the individual takes on in order to experience the language ("Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins [Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980], 2).

outside of the text, such as a conversation with the actual author to see if, for example, she believes in magical causation. The actual author is still ethically responsible for the voice of her implied authorA, as she is the one who creates and adopts that role, and the reader still treats that voice with respect, as it is connected to the shadowy subject of the actual author. But evaluations of sincerity, history, and objectivity are external to the narrative proper.

Second, this discussion shows that each reader will construct a more or less different 'voice of the author.' There is simply no way to fully ground the implied reader in the authorial audience, *especially as the latter is only quasi-textual: it only exists 'in' the author's mind*. This does not result in a free-for-all, for the authorial audience does function as a cipher for the intended audience, and the reader does have access to this. Indeed, our model reader creates a congruence between the authorial audience and the implied reader, so that communication is more likely to occur. Such will neither result in a single meaning nor a universe of meaning, but only in a narrow band of possible meanings.

Third, it suggests that the 'voice of the author' is constructed: it is not a mystical presence that hangs over the text or whispers in the reader's ear. It is constructed along a tortuous path taken by the reader, being rooted in the initial guesses (about the culture), the competencies developed (the ideal reader), and the individuation of these for the text at hand (the implied reader). These guesses become increasingly restricted by the nature of the social institutions, as each institution has a structure and generates expectations, and these allow the reader to engage in immanent critique (as suggested by the presence of disjunctions). At this point the reader is *as close to the node connecting the reader-system and author-system as can be had*: the reader is attempting to use the text in the way that the author designed the text to be used.

Fourth, this discussion suggests that narrative meaning is not tied to an external viewing of the objects, but is more like Heidegger's description of use-based meaning.⁹⁸ The 'object' is known by how it is experienced in the possible-world conditions of the story-world, not by how it is described. In other words, narrative event cannot be reduced to character description and plot analysis. Indeed, event as 'experienced meaning' cannot even be tied to non-interacting objects, such as Heidegger's examination of a hammer or a

98 This is Heidegger's distinction between use (readiness to hand) as an ontologically privileged position, and description (present to hand). Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenology and Fundamental Ontology," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 232.

person's shoes. Readers are acted upon in the story-world, and so actively participate in its events.

This means that the voice of the author is not located in any external evaluation of the text, as in a scientific, anthropologic, historical, or sociologic evaluation. These methods may be used to construct and understand the story-world, but they occur from a non-participatory position. For example, the scientist may examine the story about the 'demon causing convulsions,' and evaluate the story as representing a pre-scientific view of the world, while the anthropologist might suggest that possession represents a mode of resistance to colonial forces. These types of interpretation, in the restrictive form noted here, only engage the text as an explanation of its elements. When taken by themselves, they miss the participatory elements of the narrative, and so fail to access components that are necessary for the construction of narrative meaning: actually feeling the fear of death, the dread of being taken over, the loss of communal identity, the anxiety over impurity, and the worry about abandonment by God and humans alike. Indeed, any method that neglects the notion of 'participation' or 'experienced event,' misconstrues the ontology of narrative.⁹⁹ Rather, the voice of the author is grounded in the reader's participation in the events, and is experienced through the modality of multiple languages (linguistic, emotional, kinesthetic, archetypal, etc.). As Robinson notes, emotional responses "are necessary in order . . . to understand the novel."¹⁰⁰

In summary, the voice of the author is reconstituted upon the base of the ideal reader (approximating the intended audience), as restricted by the reader's recognition of specific textual cues (approximating the role of the implied reader), as experiencing the narrative's events (participatory engagement), as textured by specific values (constructing the implied authorR), and as engaged without resistance. Any meanings so found may be said to approximate the voice of the author, for the reader *is using the text as the author so planned and is as close to the authorial system as the reader can approach*. While this still allows for a variety of possible meanings, it is a restricted set.

99 Narrative uses an event-based ontology. To read narrative in other ways, such as propositional language or data about culture, is to miss what narratives are designed to be (it misconstrues their intentional object).

100 Jenefer Robinson, "The Emotions in Art," in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 187.

Locating the Text: Culture and Conventions

To this point, we have been tracking a particular interpretive stance, which is called 'conventionalism.'¹⁰¹ In this stance, the author's meaning is assumed to be adequately conveyed by the linguistic and literary conventions of public language, so that no reference needs to be made to outside materials, such as an author's comments on her work. The reader simply turns to the public language conventions of the intended audience. After all, this is the language design that the author (implied authorA) instantiated in the text, that the author expected the reader to use, and that the author uses when she reads her own text. Should ambiguity be recognized in the text, either the remainder of the text is used to resolve it, or the text is assumed to be deliberately ambiguous.¹⁰² So, in conventionalism, there is never a reason to turn to outside authorial materials, such as the author's memoirs, speeches, introductions, or biography.

However, this stance is based on a series of hidden assumptions. *The first assumption* is that the author and reader have competence in the language of the intended audience. While we noted this mismatch above, here we turn to the specific issues involved. Language competence is not a single thing, as if public language were a set monolithic structure. It is better to describe public language as occurring under a statistical curve of usages for a particular cultural moment, with 'normal usages' confined to the central regions, 'uncommon-but-acceptable uses' occurring further out, and 'idiosyncratic uses' at the tail ends of the curve. The problem is that authors and readers may inhabit different 'regions' in this curve of usage.

This problem is exacerbated by the realization that multiple speech communities utilize the same 'public language,' with each occupying a different segment along this curve. One only needs to compare a journal from the speech community of chemists to that of poets to appreciate the differences. Both use 21st century American English, but the chemist may lack sufficient competence in the structure of a sonnet to even recognize the form. Minor

101 On the classification scheme, see Irvin, "Authors, Intentions and Literary Meaning," 114. This stance is also called "anti-intentionalism." We are using conventionalism in its more conservative application, by tying the text's language to the cultural conventions of the intended audience, understood robustly. More radical uses exist; cf. the example of conservative vs. radical reader-response criticism in Kevin Vanhoozer, "The Reader in New Testament Interpretation," in *Hearing The New Testament*, ed. Joel Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 301–328, esp. 306–312.

102 Cf. Irvin, "Authors, Intentions and Literary Meanings," 121.

variations characterize each speech community, so that language competence is actually language competencies. Further, each of these speech communities is plagued by a dynamic shifting of conventions across time, so that competence can only be characterized for a particular cultural moment within each speech community. This means that language competence is actually a string of *temporally bound language competencies*.

All of this variability suggests a problem for the conventionalist. The author may write for an intended audience, but this is based on the *author's grasp of that speech community's temporal usage* (the authorial audience). The reader may read from the position of the intended audience, but this is based on *the reader's grasp of a particular speech community at a particular time* (the ideal reader). The hope is that both end up using the same conventions, but the variability of temporally bound language competencies guarantees that this speech situation is never ideal. Indeed, even when both are from the same speech community, ambiguities still intrude, because of deeper issues tied to language acquisition (cf. Chapter 2) and the indeterminacy of language itself (*Excursus* below). In short, the reader's application of standard language conventions does not guarantee that understanding has occurred, so that conventionalism is inherently limited with respect to communication. Something 'outside' of the text may be necessary for more complete communication and understanding.

The *second assumption* is that the author chose to write from within these standard uses. As noted above, 'standard uses' are statistical notions based on historical usage, and can be found in standard reference works. These constitute a metadiscourse over language, representing a conservative impulse that attempts to stabilize the language stream in a prescriptive way.

However, these are not 'laws,' and further have no clear edge where 'standard' usage stops. Standard usage blends into regional dialects, uncommon-but-acceptable usage, and idiosyncratic uses, and these latter zones are the areas that authors especially enjoy inhabiting. Here usage becomes increasingly experimental, introducing vibrancy in language through the creative use of words and forms, resulting in new metaphors, defamiliarization, and the like. The author may even take isolated steps far beyond acceptable limits, as in the formation of a neologism. Indeed, the author may even flout the notion of determinacy by engaging in the use of deliberate ambiguity.¹⁰³ Our point is that authors do not necessarily write from within acceptable usages,

103 This is a reference to H.P. Grice's "conversational maxims," where deliberate ambiguity flouts the "maxim of manner" ("Logic and Conversation," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 168.

even when they know them. Creative usage represents a destabilizing impulse, which temporally shifts the language stream.

This creates a problem for the conventionalist. How does such a reader engage non-conventional language? As Irvin notes: "...it is unclear that the conventionalist can allow for the possibility of an author's using words in an idiosyncratic (or unconventional) way."¹⁰⁴ Certainly, readers must begin with the assumption that the author is using standard language, for without this, the reader would have to query each word and grammatical structure for idiosyncratic usage. But a wholesale reliance upon standard language assumes that the author is never creative, i.e., that she never utilizes her subjectivity in creating newness. In short, the stance of conventionalism requires that both author and reader be 'hyper-normal' in their use of language, even though this is clearly not the case. This suggests that something 'outside' of the text may be necessary for more complete communication and understanding.

The *third assumption* is that that author is a skilled user of public language. Some authors have 'language competence' and choose to use 'standard language,' but are clumsy in their application. Clumsiness most often occurs when an author fails to recognize the different ways that a word or phrase may be construed (polysemy, intertextuality, heteroglossia). By failing to extinguish other possible readings, the passage becomes ambiguous for the reader (unintended ambiguity). The skilled author often identifies these upon rereading her text, and corrects them by adding further context. Should she write: "Martha bought a pen . . .", she might limit the ambiguity by changing this to "a pen for her horse" or "a pen for writing." Yet despite efforts at clarity, some ambiguity always remains (see *Excursus*). This is especially the case at higher levels of complexity, as in the construction of themes, which require the synthesis of conflicting events, evaluative statements, and variable emphases. Unintended ambiguity cannot be completely avoided. Such was the failed dream of logical positivism, in its quest for 'precision' in language.

So how does the conventionalist deal with clumsiness? This reader may turn to the larger context of the narrative or various cultural resources, but if the author was unusually inept, even these may fail. The conventionalist, *who only applies the language conventions of the intended audience*, will have no further materials for resolving unintended ambiguity. He cannot access outside authorial materials (commentary, memoirs, introductions, interviews, etc.), where the author might have addressed these.

In the end, the conventionalist makes a series of assumptions about language that are problematic. In the ideal scheme envisioned, the implied

104 Irvin, "Authors, Intentions and Literary Meanings," 121; author's parenthesis.

authorA and the ideal reader are 'hyper-normal' in their language usage: both are wholly competent and skilled in its conventions, and both are wholly uncreative in its usage. This is not the case for any flesh-and-blood author or reader. The assumption that the author only uses the standard language forms, fails to adequately characterize all of an author's language. While conventionalism is adequate for most of the author's language, something 'outside' of the text may be necessary for more complete communication and understanding.

Locating the Text 2.0

Authors rarely feel bound by the conventions of language. They enjoy inhabiting the outer edges of 'standard language' in order to, say, devise a malapropism, create a new metaphor, fashion a neologism, or work with deliberate ambiguity. As these are generally a manifestation of the author's subjectivity, the implication is that they are not part of public language, but constitute a 'private' language, and as such are 'radically other.' Such might sound a death knell to the stance of conventionalism.

But if the author desires to be understandable, this is not the case. The stance of 'radical otherness' suggests no points of contact with the reader, and this creates a contradiction with the notion of the 'understandable.' In order to be understandable, the author must, at the very least, encode her newness in an alphabet that her intended audience knows. Even in the experimental language of *The Revelation to John* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, one does not find true radical otherness, but marks that already conform to a traditional lettering system, allowing them to be characterized as 'words.'¹⁰⁵ Further, these words generally fit into a culture's grammar and take on its language functions, showing that they are fashioned upon the existing structure of language—its trace always bleeds through. For example, a new metaphor is still constructed out of English letters, these letters are still grouped into words, the words still conform to the form of a metaphor ('x' is 'y'), and this form still assumes the function of a metaphor (a figure of speech based on comparison, but not

105 While Davidson might note that Joyce was "not the slave of settled meanings, hypos-tatized connotations, rules of grammar, established styles and tastes, 'correct' spellings" (Davidson, "James Joyce and Humpty Dumpty," 152), it is just as correct to say that Joyce still used a common alphabet and generally followed common spellings, etc. Even Davidson recognizes this, as when he uses *Finnegan's Wake* as an exemplar of innovative language: "Fully a third of the 'words' belong to no language at all" (Ibid.), which means that fully two-thirds of the words do belong to 'standard' language.

synonymy). By utilizing existing features of public language, the new metaphor conforms to the abstract notion of 'understandable,' and so is partially located in the language system of the intended audience.¹⁰⁶

However, it is just as clear that these 'bits' of newness are not fully reducible to understanding in that language system. That is the characteristic of newness: as a manifestation of the author's subjectivity, it cannot fully be reduced to an existing cultural object, for it is not an existing cultural object. Here readers are being asked to step beyond their cultural horizons, and create something that is 'on the other side.' This brings us to a central problem in locating the text, namely how readers locate a 'word' that has both common (public) and subjective (private) components. For the sake of simplicity, we will limit this discussion to a text that the author designed for her own culture and speech community.

The author reproduces her culture and her subjectivity in the words of the text, and this means that she locates these words *in her culture* and *in her subjective experience*. By locating her words in her social institutions, the author binds her language to the particularity of her cultural moment. But by locating her words in her experiences, she binds her language to the particularity of her private experience. Both are mapped onto her use of words, suggesting not only public uses, but also a surplus that brings private additions with each word. For example, let us return to the worker who was told that a gasoline drum was empty. As 'empty' had the cultural categories of 'no liquid' and 'inert,' the worker acted upon these categories and cut into the drum with a torch. To the degree that the categories of 'empty' are common, the experience of 'empty-ness' is expected to be common. As these categories 'came' to the worker from his culture, we would be correct in concluding that one's language is located in existing social institutions, and this creates a common experience of the world. This is the mechanism which powers the notion of hegemony in ideological language.

However, the other side is that language also accumulates private attachments, based on one's subjective experience. The worker who cut into the 'empty' gasoline drum found that it blew up on him. This experience caused him to reshape the categories of 'empty,' so that henceforth it retained the common category of 'no liquid,' but with the private attachment of 'still reactive.'

106 Ludwig Wittgenstein calls this "stage-setting," and notes that a neologism still presupposes "the existence of the grammar of the word" (*The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Kenny [Malden: Blackwell, 1994], 147). This also suggests our answer to Meno's Paradox.

Here the individual's subjective experiences of the world reshaped those categories of language, *so that the categories tend not to be common after all*.

Now, when an author writes under the desire to be understandable, she generally emphasizes the first part, namely that categories tend to be common. Indeed, she expects and believes that her audience's experience of the world is relatively common. After all, we all have the same senses, and so the same input data (this was the grounding for Empiricism). But the second part, about subjective experiences, intrudes into all this 'sameness,' disrupting common human experience. Subjective elements attach to word usage, so that exact usage cannot be predicted with reliability.

When it comes to larger and more complex structures, such as social institutions, the subjective components of experience are even greater. For example, some humans experience 'patriarchy in economic institutions' in a positive fashion, as it allows them to pay women less for the same work, and so increase profits for their company. Others experience that institution in a negative fashion, for they recognize that the system devalues women and their work. While social institutions—which includes language—tend to have a leveling force on all participants, this leveling force is incomplete. Subjective experience and the subjective creation of newness continue to intrude on language usage and location. As Bakhtin has noted, language is "shot through with intentions . . . it is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others."¹⁰⁷

With this background in mind, we return to the problem: how does the reader locate the subjective elements of the author's language? After all, the author does not define these components for the reader, *as she expects her subjective experience to be common experience!* The place to begin this discussion is at the level of recognition. The reader (ideal reader) encounters subjective elements as a violation of his expectations, whether this is at the level of word usage, literary form, or social practice.¹⁰⁸ This creates a disjunction: the sense that something does not quite fit. More specifically, it is experienced as a form of textual resistance to the reader's expectations. In its simplest form, the reader's application of 'standard language' to the text creates a bit of meaning that resist integration. This is a 'single-point' disjunction, as when the reader encounters a neologism. In its more complex form, the problem is global: the reader's application of standard language creates multiple bits that cannot fit

107 M.M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, transl. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 291–292.

108 In our example, the author and reader are from the same speech community, so that this cannot be a cross-cultural disjunction, but only an intra-cultural one.

together, for the interconnections themselves are tied to a different set of categories (e.g., a different symbolic universe, different social institutions).

We have already examined the simple form in our example of ‘empty.’ Another simple example occurs in the idiosyncratic use of single word, as in this sentence spoken by an autistic child: “They’re having a meal, and then they’re finishing and siding the table.”¹⁰⁹ All these words are part of the modern English vocabulary and fit into common grammatical constructions. But applying these standard uses creates bits of meaning that do not fit our expectations. More specifically, the opening words generate the expectation of something that occurs at the end of a meal, and yet this expectation cannot come to fulfillment under the standard uses of ‘siding.’ Readers recognize a disjunction *between the cues that create expectations and the realization of those expectations*. While we will explore how one deals with such disjunctions in the next chapter, suffice it to say here that the child used ‘siding’ with our notion of ‘clearing the table.’ It is an idiosyncratic use of the word.

As an example of the ‘complex’ form, consider the story of the *Storm at Sea* (Mk. 4:35–41), as read by modern readers. Initially these readers come upon a ‘windstorm’ and ‘waves’ that are swamping a boat. They apply their symbolic universe and conceive of these as physical objects that follow physical laws. But then Jesus “rebukes” (*epitimaō*) the wind. Here our readers encounter a disjunction: they know what the word ‘rebuke’ means, but—given their symbolic universe—expect a different kind of response. Is Jesus being theatrical here? Is he mocking the disciples? Next, Jesus orders the wind to “be muzzled” (*phimoō*). Now our readers are baffled. Why would anyone say such a thing to ‘the wind’? Then the story states that Jesus’ command is immediately followed by a “great calm.” Surely, this could only be coincidental. But then, why are the disciples “filled with awe”? Are they superstitious? Are they children who engage in magical thinking? Are they mocking Jesus? Next, Jesus accuses the disciples of having “little faith,” which makes no sense at all: what were they supposed to have believed, since the entire incident was characterized by coincidence and lucky timing? Modern readers know what all of the words mean and apply all of the right grammatical constructions, but when they apply their post-Enlightenment grasp of the world, they only create multiple non-coherent bits of meaning, with interconnections that make no sense.

109 Joanne Volden and Catherine Lord, “Neologisms and Idiosyncratic Language in Autistic Speakers,” *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 21, no. 2 (1991): 118. Their definition of idiosyncratic language is: “. . . the use of conventional words or phrases in unusual ways to convey specific meanings” (Ibid., 111). Literary critics have also long recognized that authors use words/phrases idiosyncratically.

The 1st century audience, on the other hand, was using a pre-Enlightenment grasp of the world, where the notion of 'spiritual causation of the wind' allowed readers to easily connect these elements. This suggests, initially, that the problem is simply a different set of assumptions about the world. By locating the words/concepts in 1st century culture, under the stance of conventionalism, many of these disjunctions are resolved. Such disjunctions are cross-cultural in type, where the reader has applied the institutions of a different culture than those used by the author. This has nothing to do with authorial subjectivity, but only cultural location.

However, even an application of 1st century assumptions results in a complex set of disjunctions. While the wind is recognized as a manifestation of the demonic, Jesus does not use the 'godly means' of dealing with demons: he does not make a sacrifice to God, pray to God, or utilize God's name (cf. the 'godly means' in I QapGen. 21, Tobit 3:16–17, Jub. 10:1–6). He does not even act as the magicians of that period: he does not employ an amulet, root, or incantation (cf. examples in Test. Sol. 22:2–15, Josephus Ant. 8.46–47, Josephus War 7.181–185). Thus, Jesus' actions do not make sense *even in this cultural context*, and his accusation of 'faithlessness' still seems out of place. The reader could only remain puzzled about what had happened, perhaps asking, as do the disciples: "Who is this . . ." (Mk 4:41). The reader has encountered a disjunction that is due to non-conformity with existing cultural models: it is an intra-cultural disjunction, as a manifestation of the author's subjectivity.

So, how does the reader engage these subjective components? What the reader needs is direct, unmediated access to the author's mental acts, but he does not have this. As the author's subjectivity is tied to her prior experiences of the world—or so it is assumed—the reader might attempt to access these by turning to materials outside of the narrative, such as the author's biographical events. But what are the connections between an author's life experiences and her text? Are these connections reliable? Can biography tell us what an author 'meant' to say? Are there resources in language to help us with subjective additions to language? We will pick up this discussion in the next chapter, where we move beyond the ability to recognize subjective components, and address ways to engage them.

Conclusions

We began this chapter by examining a discussion between two literary theorists. In this discussion it became clear that 'showing disrespect' to a text is tantamount to showing disrespect to the implied author^A and its creator,

the actual author. Now we have a theoretical base for that claim: the author reproduces her subjectivity in the text, using the model of intentional causation. The text is her voice in the world, even though she is speaking through an implied authorA. Her desire to 'say something' results in writing behavior, where she reproduces the designs of her culture, psychology, and subjectivity in the text. She synthesizes these as her intentional object(s), that is, as the something that she desired to say in the first place. When she publishes that text, she further instantiates the design of 'being understandable' to a particular audience.

These twin notions, to 'communicate something' and to be 'understandable,' form the contours of the author-text relation. For the author, these designs delimit the possible meanings of the text, so that she never conceives of her text as wholly open. *Thus the author cannot state that the text only means what she says it means, or that it does not mean anything in general.* To do so is to suggest that the text has no designs . . . or that these designs have no function . . . or that the designs are un-discoverable. Our discussion on the intentional acts of communication and publishing have shown quite the opposite. The author could choose to be deceptive, but when the author is being insincere, she is treating her audience as an object for manipulation. Austin uses the following example: "If I say 'I congratulate you' when I'm not pleased or when I don't believe that the credit was yours, then there is insincerity."¹¹⁰ In such a situation, genuine communication is by definition not possible: language is being used strategically instead of communicatively.

In this chapter, we also developed principles that underlie an ethic of reading. As the author is a subject of equal value to the reader, her voice deserves the same respect that readers give their own voices. This 'respect' is shown when the reader reads the text as the author designed for it to be read, that is, by taking account of the author-text relation. In short, our model ethical readers begin by identifying the intended audience and reading the text with their linguistic and literary conventions (ideal reader). They do not locate the words of the *Storm at Sea* or the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* by the modern uses of English words or in post-Enlightenment social institutions, but in first-century versions of each.

Finally, we have examined a communication model which suggests that the authorial track and the readerly track are separate, so that direct communication is quite impossible. However, there is node of contact between the two systems, at the level of the authorial audience and the implied reader,

110 J.L. Austin, "Performative Utterances," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1434.

and the correspondence between these two elements can be maximized in order to facilitate communication. This occurs when the implied reader is fashioned upon the intended audience (ideal reader) and individuated by the text (matching of social institutions). Communication occurs when this reader (the reading-self) assumes this role without resistance, participates in the events of the text, and textures these with the values of the implied authorR. It is only in this participation that the reader develops the type of meaning that could be considered 'communication' from the implied authorA. While this path generally accounts for the author's reproduction of her culture in her text, it does not account for the intrusions of her subjectivity... and so we turn to the next chapter.

Excursus: The Ideal Communication Situation

Throughout this chapter, we have made reference to the abstract notions of 'communicable' and 'understandable,' and tied these to shared language conventions under the implicit social contract of communication. We have also noted how the author's meaning necessarily diverges from what the reader constructs, even if only marginally. But what if an ideal communication situation existed? That is, what if both were from the same speech community, were fully skilled in their usage, and employed these conventions in a standard manner? Would communication then be complete, with a collapse of the 'writer meaning—reader meaning' distance? At core, we are asking if language, in the most ideal state conceivable, has the resources to enable full communication.

While we do not have room to discuss these issues in full, this is the place to recognize the issues and point the reader in the direction of our answers. We begin by briefly outlining some of the objections to 'compete' communication: (1) Quine states that language is characterized by an inescapable indeterminacy (indeterminacy of translation, radical translation, ontological relativity). A word has no independent fund of 'inner meaning,' and a person from one culture never 'knows' the ontological structure that a person from another culture maps onto her language (Quine's example of 'gavagai'). Indeed, given our discussion on language acquisition, no one fully 'knows' the mapping of any other person (cf. Chapter 3, section "On the Assimilation of Language"). For this reason, words cannot mean in exactly the same way to different people... or even the same person across time (example of 'empty,' where the gas drum explodes). (2) Derrida states that the usage of a word can never be fully established. Creating a word's use requires access to surrounding words, and yet these surrounding words must access the word in question in order to

establish their usage. Eagleton summarizes: "The process . . . (is) circular: signifiers keep transforming into signifieds and vice versa, and you will never arrive at a final signified which is not a signifier in itself."¹¹¹ Derrida applies this to all discourse, written or spoken, so that meaning is always ephemeral and insubstantial: meaning is differed, receding from the reader, slipping though one's fingers as one tries to grasp it. (3) Hirsch argues for a radical indeterminacy based on the variety of possible meanings for words and conventions within any community: "Almost any word sequence can, under the conventions of language, legitimately represent more than one complex meaning."¹¹² Maynard helpfully examines these "unclearities" across the three areas of words, syntax, and figures of speech.¹¹³ (4) Ricoeur argues that a text means different things to different readers, because the text is not tied to its originating situation and audience (similar to Derrida's 'iterability'). He calls this "distanciation," and writes: "What happens in writing . . . (is) the detachment of meaning from the event."¹¹⁴ In escaping the originating event, it has also escaped the possibility of original or intended meaning to the present reader. Gadamer's critique also fits here, for Gadamer suggests that each reader is caught in the stream of effective history, which determines what the reader finds. (5) Levinson argues that in certain circumstances, writer meaning (utterer's meaning) and text meaning (utterance meaning) come apart, as various elements of the controlling context may be missing due to deliberate ambiguity, insincerity, or deception. He uses the example of a letter which is designed to deceive, because the author is insincere.¹¹⁵ (6) Foucault argues that texts are manifestations of multiple power relations, so that the text always represents multiple conflicting voices. In a similar way, the socio-critical methods examine the influence of ideological subtexts that stand in conflict with sentence meaning. Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia and polyphony also fit here.

From these we would be tempted to draw the conclusion that even in an ideal communication situation, communication would be quite impossible. One might call this a thesis of radical indeterminacy. However, this is not our conclusion. While it is clear that complete communication is impossible,

111 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 111.

112 E.D. Hirsch, "In Defense of the Author," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 13.

113 John Maynard, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009), 103–123.

114 Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 25; cf. Maynard, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers*, 101.

115 Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 226.

imperfect communication certainly occurs: when I order a 'refrigerator' over the phone, I do not receive a 'baseball.' Even if I do receive a baseball, *sufficient resources exist in language for me to abstractly talk about* 'the original meaning' or 'what I meant to say' to the salesperson, and the court system will ensure that I receive the refrigerator. Thus we offer a critique to the above arguments.

(A) Language is not nearly as indeterminate as Hirsch or Derrida suggest. Behavioral evidence shows that genuine communication does occur (a form of pragmatism, as with Quine). A key example is when one asks for a product over the phone, and receives that product in the mail. Another example, which goes to communication across cultures, is that of an international treaty with mutual verifiability conditions (see earlier in this chapter). A final example is of a multinational corporation, where the machined parts from various countries—each with their own language—fit together in a final product. While some suggest that these are technical languages, they are still constructed out of and tied to ordinary language components (as is every metalanguage). Even Beardsley, after debunking the seeming indeterminacy of Hirsch's example, writes:

But if Hirsch cannot make his postulate of (practically) universal indeterminacy stick in this chosen case, it seem fair to conclude that examples of radically indeterminate poems are not all that easy to come by.¹¹⁶

(B) Language contains resources for the stabilization of meaning and for the correction of communication errors. Habermas writes:

Communication takes place in accordance with rules that the partners to the dialogue have mastered. These rules, however, not only make consensus possible; they also include the possibility of setting situations right in which understanding is disturbed.¹¹⁷

Examples include resources such as the assertives: 'I did not mean that' or 'That is not what I meant to say.' These constitute an abstract metadiscourse which critiques 'ordinary' language usage (the original conversation), so that the correction occurs with an even more abstract use of language—and the *behavioral verification (the correction) that follows* shows that communication even occurs here.

¹¹⁶ Monroe Beardsley, "The Authority of the Text," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 31.

¹¹⁷ Jürgen Habermas, *On the Logic of the Social Sciences*, trans. Shierry Nicholson and Jerry Stark (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1970), 145.

(C) Many of the arguments about indeterminacy are based on short passages, such as a word or a sentence, that have been excised from a broader context. When placed in a larger context, the indeterminacy decreases, though it never disappears. That is, the degree of multiple meanings for any particular word decreases as one ascends the literary structure (from words to sentences to paragraphs). It is for this reason that 'playing with words' generally occurs at the lower levels of literary structure, where multiple meanings are increased.

(D) The notion that a text is completely separated from its originating event means that the text is fully separable—in a Humean way—from its cause (originating event). We refuted this notion in our earlier discussion, using material from Wittgenstein and Seale. A clear example of this connection occurs in the adjudication of certain legal instruments, such as a will. This document is not permitted to 'take on a life of its own,' in the sense of: detaching itself from the originating context (a legal event), from the author's intention (to become active at the author's death), from the activating event (the death of the author), or from the original language conventions of the author (lawyer's use of language). Indeed, in Chapter 8 we will use the text itself in the identification of the original cultural context. While a certain level of distanciation pervades all language, it is problematic to assert that the text "escape(s) from the finite intentional horizon of its author and transcend the psychosociological conditions of its own production."¹¹⁸

(E) While a text is written to a cultural context that may have vanished, this does not mean that the cultural context cannot be approximated as a reconstruction. As Gadamer notes:

The historical consciousness is clearly doing something similar when it places itself within the situation of the past and hence is able to acquire the right historical horizon. Just as in a conversation, when we have discovered the standpoint and horizon of the other person, his ideas become intelligible . . .¹¹⁹

Indeed, to assume that the reader cannot achieve some reconstruction is to assume that the human cannot recognize/reduce otherness. In such a system, a person would not be able to recognize or understand any newness, but be perpetually confined to his provincial grasp of the world.

¹¹⁸ Maldoon, *On Ricoeur*, 51.

¹¹⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Principle of Effective-History," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 270.

(F) When an author engages in insincerity, communication turns into pseudo-communication. In this application, insincerity occurs when the author writes a text for a public audience, but specifically designs it to create an intentional object for herself, which is different from what she expects her intended audience to construct. In Levinson's example (above), the student designs her letter so that her professor (the intended audience) constructs it as a compliment, while she recognizes it as revealing the professor's problems. This definition covers deception, while generally excluding irony and most figures of speech. This form of pseudo-communication engages Searle's 'sincerity' and 'essential' conditions, and Habermas' notion of 'truthfulness'.¹²⁰ When insincerity occurs, genuine communication is not expected to occur, as it violates the implicit social contract upon which communication is based.

120 John Searle, "The Structure of Illocutionary Acts," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (New York: Oxford, 2001), 143, 145–146. On deception, Anita Avramides concludes: "It is interesting to note that it is the possibility of deception which has made the formulation of sufficient conditions for (speaker) meaning so difficult. The possibility of deception lies, we might say, at the very heart of meaning" ("Intention and Convention," in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Bob Hale and Crispin Wright [Malden: Blackwell, 1997], 75). On Habermas, cf. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 1.99.

Intentional Ways of Reading

How do readers ‘take account’ of the subjective elements in an author’s language? Are there ways of locating the subjective elements? In this chapter, we will examine a variety of approaches which claim to do just that. The traditional way of approaching these questions is through a series of mechanisms which link the text to various materials ‘outside’ of the text. While these linkages are fairly diverse, all suggest that a more adequate understanding of the text can be had by exiting the text and turning to authorial materials. To these mechanisms we now turn.

Biography as a Guide to Interpretation

Accessing an author’s biography is one of the oldest methods for going outside of the text in order to explain the author-text relation or, for our purposes, the subjective elements of an author’s language.¹ By examining the major events of the author’s life, it was thought that readers could find the clues to construct the author’s ‘intended meaning.’ This was based on the Romantic assumption that genuine art was a sincere expression of the self. So Bennett writes that the Romantic text was “ideally, a direct repetition, an expression or confession, in speech, of the author’s innermost thoughts or feelings, indeed of his self or soul.”² This notion gave rise to one form of Romantic interpretation, where reading was designed to overhear the author’s inner thoughts, and so to gain the special vision of the author. Since the text was an expression of the author’s inner self, interpretation required access to that ‘inner self,’ and this was constructed by gathering the author’s life experiences. Abrams addresses this strand, stating that the goal was “to isolate and explain the special quality of a work by reference to the special quality of the character, life, lineage, and

1 Note that we are primarily interested in personal events here (e.g., the death of a parent), and not public events (e.g., a world war). Generally speaking, the author doesn’t expect her readers to know her private history, but does expect them to be aware of the general cultural and historical context.

2 Andrew Bennett, “Expressivity: the Romantic Theory of Authorship,” in *Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Patricia Waugh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 51.

milieu of its author.”³ Biography provided those insights. As Schleiermacher wrote, the reader’s goal was “to understand the writer intimately to the point that one transforms oneself into the other,” for the purpose of understanding the text “just as well and even better than its creator.”⁴ Thus, internal analysis of the text became contingent upon external analysis of the author. The text risked becoming an allegory of the author’s biography—an ornamental form of the author’s biography—and was only properly understood *when her biography was intimately known* (via the methods of historical analysis) *and correctly analyzed* (via the science of psychology).

For example, readers of Shelley’s *Frankenstein* might look to Shelley’s biography for understanding. In doing so, they would find that Shelly’s mother died in giving birth to her. Naturally, her reaction would be a sense of overwhelming guilt. Since Shelley is assumed to have written out of her experiences, these constitute the ‘key’ to interpreting *Frankenstein*. As Karbeiner writes: “This work must also compensate for Mary’s horrific crime: the murder of her namesake . . . (her) overwhelming sense of guilt over her mother’s death made her feel like a fiend.”⁵

For biblical examples, the reader of *Philippians* might turn to biographical data about Paul, as found in *Acts*. Consider Phil. 2:22: “But Timothy’s worth you know, how like a son with a father he served with me in the work of the gospel.” Paul does not reference the target experience of “you know, how like a son . . . he has worked with me” in this text. So the reader might turn to biographical notes about this visit, as found in Acts 16. In the opening verses of this chapter, the reader finds that Paul and Timothy took a journey, and in verse 16 that this journey went through Philippi. In verses 16–23, the reader finds that persecution broke out, but that Timothy did not abandon the cause, for he is still present in 17:14. From these biographical notes, the reader might conclude that Paul used the phrase about Timothy’s “worth,” to reference how Timothy had stayed with the Christian cause in spite of persecution, and so explain why Paul so trusted him “as a son” with the task at hand.

3 M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 227; cf. 236, where Abrams quotes Herder: “The life of the author is the best commentary on his writings, provided that he is genuine, and in harmony with himself . . .”

4 Friedrich Schleiermacher, “From *Hermeneutics*,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 625, 621. For Schleiermacher, hermeneutics requires that the reader assume both an objective position (e.g., “knowledge of the language as the author used it”) and subjective position (“through the knowledge of the author’s inner and outer life”) with respect to the author (*Ibid.*, 621).

5 Karen Karbiener, introduction to *Frankenstein*, by M. Shelley (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2003), xxviii.

Also consider Phil. 3:7–8, where, after Paul lists his own biographical data (circumcised, tribe of Benjamin, Hebrew, Pharisee, zealous, blameless), he adds: “Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ . . . I regard them as rubbish.” However, Paul does not tell his readers which experience caused this shift in values. So Hawthorne digs back through Paul’s biographical data, in *Acts*, to supply the experience:

The blinding light of the Christ-encounter (Acts 9:3–5) paradoxically opened Paul’s eyes to see everything clearly and in proper perspective . . . everything else that would compete for his allegiance was not only ‘loss’ but ‘filth’ by comparison . . .⁶

Finally, consider Phil. 3:18, where Paul writes: “For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears.” However, Paul does not tell the reader why he has tears. Is it because these possible members are becoming lost to the cause, or because they posed a real danger to the Christian congregation in Philippi, or something different altogether?⁷ Hawthorne attempts to resolve this by referencing biographical data. He turns to multiple events in *Acts*, where Paul’s experiences “showed to him more clearly than ever how closed off they (the ‘enemies’) were to the gospel,” and so suggests that these were tears “not of compassion . . . but of frustration at their obduracy.”⁸

In all of these examples, biographical data is used to provide insights into terms that are vague or ambiguous, or have subjective additions. However, is this kind of reasoning sound? After all, other ‘biographical’ explanations are possible for all of these examples. When Paul talks of Timothy’s “worth . . . as a son” (Phil. 2:22), could it instead refer to Timothy’s Jewish roots (Acts 16:1), which Paul shares? Or perhaps to Timothy’s status as a convert of Paul, and so as a ‘spiritual son’ (1 Cor. 4:17)? When Paul talks about regarding his past as “loss” (Phil. 3:7–8), could it instead refer to the wonder of the new life he has experienced in Christ and in the church (Phil. 1:21–25)? Indeed, could the experience behind this be the vision which caused Paul to leave for Philippi in the first place (Acts 16:9–10)? When Paul talks about “tears,” could it instead refer to Paul’s anger (tears of anger) at these “enemies” for contradicting his teaching, as occurs in Gal. 1:8–9? After all, Paul fights with other Christian teachers

6 Gerald Hawthorne, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1983), 147.

7 Cf. Peter O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, New International Greek Text Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 451 and fn. 38.

8 Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 164; parenthesis mine.

over those who are permitted to travel with him (Acts 15:37–39), and—in the present letter—even calls those who disagree with him “dogs” (Phil. 3:2). While these suggestions can be judged as more or less likely, the point is that they are possibilities based on the use of biographical data.

The problem, here, is with the linkages that are used to tie the author's biography to her text, of which there are two. First is the linkage between the author's life experiences and her inner self, and second between the author's inner self and her text. In order for these connections to have explanatory power, they are assumed, at least in part, to be causal in nature. We begin by examining the connection between the author's inner self and her text.

If the text were an accurate reflection of the author's self, then historical and biographical studies might well be appropriate. However, *it is generally impossible to decide when an author's writing is a true reproduction of her inner self and when it is the reproduction of an imagined self*. After all, an author may choose to write out of an imagined self, which stands in opposition to her normal beliefs, existing emotions, or prior lived experiences. It is this human ability that allows for counterfactual thinking, and which underlies the construct of the implied authorA. As Booth observes: “Everyone knows that authors must take on roles, that they need not be ‘sincerely’ wedded to particular characteristics in order to portray them sympathetically.”⁹ Indeed, in the last chapter we concluded that the notion of ‘sincerity’ is not a necessary characteristic of the implied authorA.

The case is even more obvious in the case of music and acting. The musician who plays a sad piece, or the actor who imitates a sad character, need not be experiencing ‘actual’ sadness. As Robinson writes: “We cannot infer from the melancholy character of the music to any melancholy in the artist. The music is a ‘melancholy expression,’ not an ‘expression of melancholy.’”¹⁰

In this way art is akin to craftsmanship: the author and musician craft a piece in order to shape an emotional response. Indeed, T.S. Eliot writes that this shaping can be mechanistic and formulaic, and not tied to anything the

9 Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 254. Cf. William Nelles, “Historical and Implied Authors and Readers,” *Comparative Literature* 45, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 22–46.

10 Jenefer Robinson, “The Emotions in Art,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Aesthetics*, ed. Peter Kivy (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 180; also cf. 179. Note the similarity of the implied authorA to the actor on a stage. Kendall Walton gets to this issue: “If fictional truths depended on actors’ private thoughts and feelings, it would be awkward and unreasonably difficult for spectators to ascertain what is going on in the fictional world” (“Fearing Fictionally,” in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes [Malden: Blackwell, 2004], 182).

author is experiencing: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding . . . a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion . . ." ¹¹

However, the issue runs deeper yet. Even when the author attempts to write 'sincerely' out of her emotions and experiences, it is generally impossible to decide if such is an *accurate reproduction* of her conscious self. After all, the author exists in a web of psychological processes which makes full knowledge of the self impossible—however the 'self' is understood. For example, Freud addressed the instinctual drives and repressed desires as emanating from a hidden unconscious. Stevenson summarizes:

For what is repressed . . . exerts its influence by sending into consciousness a disguised substitute for itself . . . they can neither get rid of the symptoms it causes, nor lift the repression and recall it to consciousness. ¹²

The author's conscious mind is not fully in control of her writing. It is for this reason that interpreters attribute unconscious and repressed meanings to authors who are seemingly unaware of that content. For example, Nehamas suggests that Sophocles' play (*Oedipus Rex*) contains the content of Freud's Oedipus complex, even though Sophocles was unaware of this construct, and his readers "could not have realized it until this century." ¹³

In this tangled web, it becomes impossible to decide to what degree the author's work is a reflection of her 'inner self,' or even which 'inner self' is being expressed! The author's conscious and unconscious selves do bear a relation to the text, but the text cannot be characterized as a necessary or an accurate reproduction of either. This was our point in developing the construct of the implied authorA, as well as in showing how an author uses specialized processes in the creation of newness. The author does not simply reiterate her world, but creates a new one. Thus, the connection between the author's 'inner self' and 'the text' is problematic: the text is not a simple reproduction of the former.

Next, let us turn to the other connection, which is the link that ties the author's life experiences to the formation of an 'inner self.' The notion that

11 T.S. Eliot, "Hamlet and His Problems," *Critical Theory Since Plato*, rev., ed. Hazard Adams (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1992), 766.

12 Leslie Stevenson and David Haberman, *Ten Theories of Human Nature*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 164.

13 Alexander Nehamas, "The Postulated Author: Critical Monism as a Regulative Ideal," in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 268.

experiences are at least partially formative of the self is beyond dispute. But can one use biographical events to reliably predict elements of the self? Such a prediction would require a fixed and causal relationship between biographical events and the self, which would require the existence of psychological laws. Only with knowledge of these laws could the interpreter *reliably predict how life events shaped the author*, instead of projecting upon the author how he (the reader) might have been shaped by such events.

However this notion, of fixed psychological laws, entails a denial of the very essence of subjectivity. This is not to say that humans can completely transcend their prior experiences, whether this is grasped as “thrown-ness” (Heidegger), “facticity” (Sartre), or “effective history” (Gadamer). It is only to suggest that the human is not a mechanism, where the ‘input’ (biographical experiences) necessarily or even reliably predicts the ‘output’ (characteristics of a self). The interpretation and valuation of the author’s experiences cannot be fully grasped by the reader, at the very least because the reader has not actually experienced those events.

Historians are faced with a similar problem. A historian collects events and arranges them into a time-sequence. The problem occurs when the historian makes causal connections, such as stating that a person did ‘X’ (some action) because of ‘Y’ (some prior experience). Here the historian has entered the realm of probability based on her understanding of some general ‘human nature.’ Indeed, White suggests that historical narratives only present one way of construing such relations, and thus are, by definition, fictional in nature. He concludes that historians construct a historical narrative by using “the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play,” so that the story is “essentially a literary, that is to say fiction-making, operation.”¹⁴ In the end, biographies that move beyond chronicles represent educated guesses about causal relations, as based on the historian’s valuation of events, interpretation of experiences, and the like. The connection between the two is based on a probability function.

Finally, using life experiences to construct ‘the author’s self’ runs into problems over the quantity and effects of the collected events.¹⁵ Does the reader

14 Hayden White, “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1715–1716, parenthesis mine. Also cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 382.

15 Paul Hamilton casts our concerns as engaging historical issues and historicist issues: “...*historical criticism* achieves its ends by contextualizing its interpretation of literary expression by reference to events or other discourses contemporary with that expression. *Historicist criticism*, though, interposes another plane of interpretation which takes as its

know all the major events in an author's life? Are major events the only shaping elements, or even the primary shaping elements? Has the reader accounted for the residue of forgotten experiences? How does the reader place the same value upon an event as does the author? These so complicate the use of biography as to render it an inherently flawed process . . . not useless, but flawed.

But readers are often not deterred. In the absence of fixed and knowable psychological connections, readers often make these connections by projecting upon the author how they (the readers) would have been shaped. After all, one's most reliable 'model of response' is one's own self, and its results have been validated by one's own experiences. In doing so, readers make the assumption of 'sameness,' i.e., that the author is just like them. Of course, there is a contradiction here: readers use their own subjectivity to predict how an author would respond, but in doing so deny the author her subjectivity!

In the end, there are serious problems with using an author's biography as the 'key' to understanding her literary work. One cannot move from 'biographical experiences' to 'text' in an unproblematic fashion. The use of an author's biographical events to locate the subjective components is subverted by *the inability to reliably predict the construction and workings of the human as a subject*. But this is not to say that biographical events are to be totally ignored. In select cases, biographical events may be suggestive and even helpful. We are simply noting that any conclusions so gleaned represent varying degrees of probability, and must necessarily be validated by other means. We will turn to these 'other means' below.

The Author's Way of Living as a Guide

While biographical studies are not the rage that they used to be, the impulse to take an author's history into account has not abated. More recent attempts track along a somewhat different path. Instead of utilizing *life experiences*, these groups rely on the concept of *consistency in authorial behavior*. We might call this the 'criterion of consistency.' This criterion moves away from the impact of isolated biographical events, which may have idiosyncratic effects, and towards identifying common threads in an author's behaviors and beliefs.

subject those present prejudices or assumptions by which such historical critics decide that something is indeed historically relevant" ("Historicism and Historical Criticism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 21; italics mine).

Such threads are expected to emerge through a careful examination of the author's way of living, as revealed in the author's many written works, general pattern of living, membership within societal groups, and the like. These materials suggest the normal workings of the author as a subject.¹⁶

For example, imagine a narrative that suggests a racist view. How might the reader evaluate this suggestion? He might well go to the author's oeuvre, and examine it for racist views. He might also check to see if the author attended civil rights rallies or had membership in racist groups. If her other writings reveal a consistent belief in equal rights and her behaviors in the world match that belief, then the text is assumed to be non-racist in nature. The reader resolves textual ambiguity by examining the author's general way of living, and uses this as the key to interpret (pre-understand) all of the author's writing. Indeed, Lowenthal even suggested giving "ideological questionnaires" to authors, in order to locate the "social position of the writer" and so evaluate the "potential influence of these hidden self-portraits on the readers."¹⁷

Readers of Pauline literature might ask this very question when they come upon 1 Cor. 7:20–21:

Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called. Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever.

These readers might wonder if Paul wrote out of racist/elitist views, as if he considered some classes of people to have more value than others. However, when they examine Paul's general evaluation and treatment of slaves, they find Gal. 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"; and also Philemon 15–16, where Paul appeals to a slave owner to receive his runaway slave "... no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord... welcome him as you would welcome me." These materials might suggest that 1 Cor. 7:20–21 is not about racism/elitism, but stems from some other concern, which would

16 Cf. Marie-Laure Ryan's use of such "extratextual information" in determining whether a narrator is reliable ("Meaning, Intent, and the Implied Author," *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 41, accessed May 13, 2014, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

17 Leo Lowenthal, "On Sociology of Literature," in *Literature and Mass Culture*, trans. Andy Blunden (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1984); accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/lowenthal/1948/literature.htm>.

have to be ferreted out. Paul's general manner of living is used to as the key to interpret his texts, especially where they are vague or ambiguous, or where subjective attachments occur.

This criterion of consistency has three concrete applications. *One application* is to examine the author's actions in the world, in hope that this will help with the product in hand. The assumption is that the same author functions as the cause of each, so that consistency is expected to occur throughout the whole. For example, it is not uncommon for an author to use a word in an unusual or even idiosyncratic way, such as the early church's use of *apostolos* (apostle), *ekklēsia* (church), and *euangelion* (gospel). Once that use is characterized, it may be applied to all of the author's uses in all of her texts. A *second application* is to examine and characterize the groups of which the author is a member. The expectation, here, is that the author embeds herself in groups which have the same pattern of beliefs as she does. A text written by a first-century Christian might be expected to manifest the views of that group on, say, the 'bodily resurrection of the dead,' as a reaction to Platonic/proto-Gnostic tendencies which valued the opposite. Readers begin with this pre-understanding of the author's identity group, and then expect all of her texts to reflect that group's patterns of beliefs, moral strictures, and the like. A *third application* is to examine the responses of the author's culture to various events. When the people in a culture have a common experience, it is assumed that the author is shaped by that experience just as the other members of that culture. By examining general cultural responses, one can predict how any particular author writes. For example, European authors of the First World War might be examined for their general responses to that war. As the vast majority considered it an irrational war, interpreters might use this as a guide to understanding any particular text from that period. Similarly, Jewish culture developed a somewhat common response to the gentile defilement of the temple (cf. Dan. 9:27, 12:11; 1 Macc. 1:54; Ant. 12.320–322), and first-century Jewish authors, such as the New Testament authors, could be expected to manifest the same (Mt. 24:15, Mk. 13:14). In all uses of this criterion, the text is grasped as a concrete manifestation of the author's general way of living, and this gives one the 'key' to the text.

However, here we must stop to ask—as we did with biographical studies—if such an application is sound. 'Manner of life' studies are based on three problematic assumptions. *The first assumption* is that all of an author's actions, including the writing of a text, are a sincere manifestation of the author's beliefs. But is the author's writing always a sincere manifestation of her inner self? We discussed this problem in the section on biography. An author,

through an implied authorA, may decide to write against her religious beliefs, emotional responses, and societal convictions, as part of her creative writing experiment. In such a case, using an author's 'typical outlook' or 'background beliefs' may distort the text's meaning...at least from the author's point of view.

Further, this assumption requires that the author act consistently across time, as if no temporal changes in the self occur. Only if the person acts consistently can her prior behaviors—in the form of literary works, concrete actions, and group memberships—be applied to the present text. But is this a legitimate assumption? For example, can the reader examine the pre-Christian Paul for character traits, and then apply these to the Christian Paul? Such an examination would identify a tenacity for 'truth' that borders on the fanatic, even to the point of killing his antagonists (cf. Acts 8:1, 3; 9:1). While the later Paul still manifest this tenacity for truth (cf. Gal. 1:8–9; Phil. 2:11), it now occurs with a significant development in his beliefs: he states that God has not rejected his antagonists (Rom. 11:2), but that they are "beloved" (Rom. 11:28), and so he no longer stones or imprisons them.

The second assumption is that readers are capable of producing an accurate reconstruction of the author by examining her historical behavior. While we discussed the problem of 'constructing the author's self' in the section on biography, the issues are different here. Earlier, historical materials were used to predict *the formation of the self*, while here they are examined as *a manifestation of the self*. Thus, this criterion attempts to correct the problems inherent to biographical study: it elides the effects of single events by examining collective behavior; it removes the effects of unusual actions by privileging common behavior; and it avoids the guesswork of how events 'form' a self by observing concrete behavior.

However, there are still problems. Here readers assume that studying the author's behavior (the effect) will allow them to correctly posit the author's character (the cause). Specifically, an examination of the author's collective actions will allow readers to reconstruct the author's attitudes, beliefs, identity, and persona (hereafter we will use the term 'subjective state' for this complex). But can one reason, with accuracy, from effects back to causes? Can one use the author's actions, group memberships, and literary oeuvre, to posit her subjective state? Physically, smoke does imply fire, but is this a necessary connection for all possible worlds?

Some authors, like E.D. Hirsch, think that psychology is up to the task. He states that such study allows the interpreter to "reproduce in himself the author's 'logic,' his attitudes, his cultural givens, in short, his world...the

imaginative reconstruction of the speaking subject.”¹⁸ Similarly, simulation theory (folk psychology) suggests that one can run a simulation of another person’s behaviors, and work backwards to the beliefs and desires that gave birth to that behavior.¹⁹ Wittgenstein and analytic behaviorism also thought that mental states could be reliably read off of one’s behaviors.²⁰

Such a project proceeds by gathering a set of the author’s behaviors, and employing some ‘rule’ to logically connect the behavior to the appropriate mental state. Examples of such ‘rules’ could be based on repressed desires, economics, or gender. But is any rule up to the task? If it is, then human behavior can be reduced to repressed desires, economics, or gender, and the notion of subjectivity evaporates! Further, behaviors are not always a *logical outworking* of beliefs and desires. If they were, then humans would only be reasonable beings, and laws of psychology could be derived from the principles of logic. Of course, this is not always the case, and this takes us to those non-rational processes posed by Freud.

Freud was working with problems encountered in the interpretation of dreams. He suggested that dreams represent the workings of the unconscious, whereby normally repressed material becomes expressed in different—and more acceptable—forms. This material could be so radically altered that the original material might not even be recognizable. The connections between the two are governed by non-rational processes, such as ‘displacement.’²¹ In displacement, a “potentially disturbing image or idea is replaced by something connected but less disturbing.”²² In this way an unacceptable desire, which would normally be suppressed by the superego, can slip out in disguised form. Only Freud did not restrict these processes to the dream world. For example, Freud noticed that ‘slips of the tongue’ (parapraxis) often represented the

18 E.D. Hirsch, “Objective Interpretation,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1707.

19 This is called “analysis by synthesis” in Stephen Stich and Shaun Nichols, “Folk Psychology,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Mind*, ed. Stephen Stich and Ted Warfield (Malden: Blackwell, 2003), 248.

20 Ludwig Wittgenstein states that one’s behavior (pacing back and forth, checking the clock) can be “translated in accordance with given rules” into the notion of “expectation” (*The Wittgenstein Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Anthony Kenny [Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1994], 87–88).

21 Anthony Storr and Anthony Stevens summarize: “Dreams, in Freud’s view, were primitive, irrational mental phenomena which ignored logic, syntax, and the consciously accepted criteria defining time and space” (*Freud & Jung: A Dual Introduction* [New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1998], 33).

22 *Ibid.* Also consider the processes of condensation and overdetermination.

passage of unconscious materials into speech. Indeed, this ability to escape the unconscious realm forms the basis for the Rorschach test and the use of free association in psychoanalysis, as well as the underlying intention for automatic writing and stream of consciousness writing in literary theory. Through pathways like this, all human actions are subject to the possibility of unconscious, non-rational modification.

In other words, having the behavior of an author *does not give the interpreter reliable information about that author's subjective state or the psychological causes involved*. As Stich and Nichols summarize on simulation theory:

An obvious problem with this strategy is that it will generate too many candidates, since typically there are endlessly many possible sets of beliefs and desires that might lead the mindreader to decide to perform the behavior in question.²³

In short, the reader cannot reliably predict the author's 'subjective state' in the first place.

Even more problematic, however, is that this approach requires readers to be wholly objective in their evaluation of the author's behaviors. In order to have a valid construct of the author's subjective state, the reader must evaluate authorial materials from some neutral, unbiased place—otherwise the construction risks being a reflection of the reader's biases. Indeed, this process requires the interpretation of behavior, and, as we have shown in Chapter 4, all interpretation is underlain by assumptions which constitute an internal bias. For these reasons, the creation of anyone's 'subjective state' is an inherently flawed process.

However, this may not deter readers. Readers may attempt to predict the author's subjective state by resorting, again, to projection. Readers may use themselves as a 'cause-effect' machine, based on their experiences in the world. When they examine the author's behavior, they decide which of their own attitudes would have produced that behavior, and simply project this upon the author. As above, the critique is that this process denies the author her subjectivity—indeed, she is seen as a 'copy' of the reader—and is further flawed by lacking all of the author's actions, history, and valuations, and so being unable to account for their effects.

In the end, this assumption is plagued by problems. Readers cannot reliably posit the subjective state of the author, readers have no neutral space in which

23 Stich and Nichols, "Folk Psychology," 248.

to evaluate the author's behavior, and readers cannot 'stand in' as a cipher for the author.

The third assumption is that interpreters can use this subjective state, however it is constructed, to interpret the author's literary works. For Hirsch (actual intentionalism), interpreters don this subjective state, so that their act of reading is the same as that of the author. In doing so, readers are expected to create the same intentional objects as the author. Nehamas (hypothetical intentionalism) is more modest in his account:

The author is postulated as the agent whose actions account for the text's features; he is a character, a hypothesis which is accepted provisionally, guides interpretation, and is in turn modified in its light . . .²⁴

But can readers 'adopt' the subjective state of another? The problem is that the reader only has an account of the author's life events (description), but not the experiences themselves (events). When the experiences are lacking, so are the foundations which support the subjective state. Sophocles gets to this point, when he has Oedipus say: "Messengers distill, abstract, smooth over. Avoiding violent speech they do violence to the truth. And there is a truth here that will not yield to words. It is in the ears and nostrils . . ."²⁵ Sophocles' point is that when *the experiences behind the message* are lacking, so is the viscosity of the message—the deep truth which structures the message. The message can be delivered, but the real truth "will not yield to words."

Likewise, to say that an author has the stance of 'kindness' or is 'disenfranchised,' is little more than a surface description, with none of the viscosity of the experiences from which it arose. When the reader adopts this stance, he only inherits a shadow of that structure. A white, empowered, educated, single American male reader cannot fully don the subjective state of a Hispanic, disenfranchised, uneducated, and married female author . . . or her attitude of 'kindness.'

To explore this further, let us cast this issue in the 'computer metaphor' of folk psychology. In this metaphor, one's subjective state is like a program that is instantiated upon the hardware (wetware) of one's brain. Once the program

24 Nehamas, "The Postulated Author," 267. On the connection between hypothetical intentionalism (which produces an author-construct) and the implied authorR, see Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller, "Six Ways Not to Save the Implied Author," *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring, 2011): 71–73, accessed April 14, 2014, *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost.

25 Sophocles, "Oedipus the King," trans. Anthony Burgess, in *Philosophy: An Introduction Through Literature*, ed. Lowell Kleiman and Stephen Lewis (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1992), 522.

is written in the correct form, the hardware runs the program no matter where or how the program originated (a functionalist approach). Such a program is expected to generate the same conclusions and actions, no matter whose hardware runs it. In this system, the reader could theoretically adopt the author's subjective state, and come to the same conclusions as any other reader . . . and even the author herself. In other words, this mechanism is based on the assumption that human subjectivity can be fully objectified and encoded, which means that there is no subjectivity at all.

The computer model also fails to work because one's subjective state is tied—at least in part—to memories, and memories cannot be fully reduced to symbolic data or propositional statements. They are events, and event-memories are no more reducible to linguistic language than a novel can be reduced to character analysis and plot summary. This is not to say that perspective taking and event-reduction are wholly invalid, but only that such 'sympathetic' processes will always be incomplete, so that the results will always be partial.

In the end, it appears that the study of an author's way of living, as processed through the criterion of consistency, does not produce reliable connections. It assumes that an author's text is a manifestation of a historically fixed self, that psychological laws can tie behavior to inner character, that anyone's 'self' can be constructed through neutral observation, and that anyone can fully understand the subjective state of another. Our position is not that such a mechanism is wholly corrupt, but only that it is not entirely reliable. 'Way of living' materials are suggestive and do provide a link to the author—unless we believe that behavior is wholly inscrutable or that a person is wholly disconnected from her prior self. Surely it is appropriate to consider an author's typical use of a word when reading that author's works, such as the first-century church's idiosyncratic use of 'gospel' and 'apostle.' The problem arises when such material is considered absolute or final. After all, *apostolos* does not always refer to those specially commissioned 'authorities' of the church, but may—quite infrequently—to non-commissioned messengers (11 Cor. 8:23). Application of this material does not render interpretation 'more objective,' but only substitutes one set of assumptions (about interpreting the text) for another (about interpreting an author's actions). As Levinson states: "The real issue, to my mind, is not whether any of this (authorial history) is relevant . . . but what the limits of relevant author-specific contextuality are."²⁶ We will turn to the appropriate use of this material below.

26 Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 248; parenthesis mine.

The Author's Future Commentary as a Guide

Another means of explicating the subjective elements of a narrative might not involve the historical author, but the future author. Future materials include all forms of authorial commentary upon the text, including memoirs, articles, speeches, introductions, interviews, and personal correspondence. After all, authors often comment on their past works, especially when they feel that they've been misunderstood. This brings us right back to our central issues of subjectivity and intentionality. The author writes commentary because she recognizes that, at least in part, her *subjective application of language* has failed to convey her meaning. So she writes commentary *as an intentional act*, where the about-ness is the explication of some earlier text: the intention to explicate is embedded in the word's use.

Using future commentary to understand the subjective elements of a text is quite different from the methods already discussed. A commentary is directly attached to the text. Readers do not have to work with indirect materials, such as the author's beliefs or life-events. Readers do not need to construct the author's subjectivity, guess at biographical connections, or answer questions about relevance. In this way readers avoid many of the problems that plague the use of biographical materials. Further, an authorial commentary is written by the author herself, and she has at least some access to what she was thinking at that time.

While 'books of commentary' do not occur in the biblical canon, internal commentary frequently does. Such may occur as comments that a speaker makes about her earlier text (Mt. 13:36–40; Mk. 4:10–20, 7:14–23; Jn. 16:16–22), explanatory comments on an actor's former actions (Exod. 9:16, Tob. 12:13–14), explanatory comments on the meaning of a preceding story (pronouncement stories, where the terminal saying 'explains' the earlier narrative; e.g., Mk. 2:15–17), and as the commentary of an omniscient narrator about the motivations of her characters (Est. 1:11; Mt. 16:1).²⁷

A particularly relevant set of examples occurs in the gospel parables, where an explanation appendage is attached to the parable proper. So, after the *Parable of the Sower* (Mk. 4:3–8), the author has Jesus give explanatory comments ("the secret of the Kingdom of God," 4:11), and an allegorical interpretation of the parable itself (4:13–20). Similarly with the *Parable of the Weeds*

27 Closely related are explanatory comments on someone else's text, whether of one's interpretation of "what God said" or "what God did" (Lev. 10:3; Eccl. 3:18; Sir. 36:4; Mt. 7:12), what a godly person, such as a prophet, meant (Mk. 7:6–8, 12:10–11; Rom 3:9–18), or an explanation of some earlier story (Rom. 4:3–11; Heb. 11:4–28).

(Mt. 13:24–30), as explained in 13:36–40. In other examples, a parable is offered as an explanation of some earlier biblical text, such as the *Parable of the Vineyard* (Mk. 12:1–9) as an explanation of Ps. 118:22–23 (Mk. 12:10–11), or the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* (Lk. 10:30–35) as an explanation of “neighbor” (from LXX version of Lev. 19:18, as applied in Lk. 10:27–29). All represent the author’s commentary on various events, which are designed to guide the reader towards her interpretation of those stories—reflecting her concern that the reader might come to a different one!

However, does future commentary provide a definitive and authoritative explanation of the earlier text? In some examples, the commentary does not appear to fit the earlier text. For example, there are several parables where the explanatory comments do not appear to fit the structure of the parable. The structure of the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* is oriented about the religious (priest, Levite)—sacrilegious (Samaritan) axis, and is not quite about the question of “who is neighbor.” A more appropriate structure for “who is neighbor” would have engaged two religious Jews from one’s home town and a third religious Jew from another city.²⁸ Similarly, the *Parable of the Workers* (Mt. 20:1–16) does not match its application appendage of: “The first shall be last.” If this had been the issue, then those hired last would have been paid more than those hired first. Instead, all are paid the same, suggesting issues of ‘egalitarianism’ in the Kingdom of God. In both examples, the commentary does not quite fit or explain the earlier text, and so raises questions about the nature of commentary itself.

This brings us to three central issues that complicate the use of commentary. *The first issue* is that the text and its commentary are written at different times. The author, due to her continued experiences, has changed across this span. So we might well ask if we have the same author in both writings. It is obvious that the person doing the writing has the same name, but unless one posits that human personality and identity are fixed across time, then it is not the same author. The author has acquired and assimilated new experiences, creating new memories; as memory changes, so does identity. Indeed, Ricoeur argues that memory is “the temporal component of identity, in conjunction with the evaluation of the present and the projection of the future.”²⁹ This

28 Cf. John Crossan: “If Jesus wanted to teach love of neighbor in distress, it would have sufficed to use the standard folkloric threesome and talk of one person, a second person, and a third person . . . if he had wanted to inculcate love of one’s enemies, it would have been radical enough to have a Jewish person stop and assist a wounded Samaritan” (*In Parables* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1973], 63–64).

29 Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 81.

temporal stringing of memory, psychological states, and mental states is one of the means by which the self—however it is understood—constitutes itself, and recognizes itself as the same self across time.³⁰ This is even the case for those who see the self as plural, for each contextual self still constitutes itself in relation to some past: the human does not start each ‘new self’ *ex nihilo*, as if one could start from the ‘o’ position that was prior to all events, experiences, language, culture, and the like. All of this is to say that future commentary is written by an author *with existential differences* from the author of the text.

The obvious rejoinder is that the author simply needs to ‘return to her former self,’ as encoded in memory. But can an author return to her former self in a reliable way? Is the chain of memory that good? After all, a person does not remember or count her experiences in the same way across time. An intense experience may, over the years, come to appear relatively common. It may even be forgotten, leaving only a preconscious residue which, nonetheless, continues to have effects. Such changes may even suggest new options for meaning, which were not available to the earlier author.

Thus any return, defined as a reconstruction of a prior moment in the self’s history, is always partial and incomplete. A definite connection persists, and this connection adds privileged information that is not generally available to the reader. But reliance upon this as ‘ground truth’ remains problematic.

The second issue is that commentary is written with a different intended audience in the author’s mind. This new audience differs in time, culture, and interests, and is further different—at the very least—by having already read the text. If the author desires to be understandable to this new intended audience, she will need take these differences into account. The question, then, is whether an author so links her text to the original audience, that a change in the audience creates a mismatch between her original meaning and her later explanation.

This is the problem especially envisioned in our notes on the parables: the original parables were spoken to an audience that is very different from the one to which the commentary is written. This new audience is—at the very least—after the resurrection, the Neronian persecution, the formation of the church, and the arguments over keeping Jewish law. Does this shift in culture, history, and audience cause the author to produce a different explanation?

Certainly, she recognizes different questions and interests brought by each audience. Perhaps a parable that was designed for a religious/sacrilegious problem can be adapted to an audience with a neighbor/foreigner problem. So Ong notes that an oral performance “includes its interaction with and adjustment

30 This is the persistence problem, as discussed in Chapter 4.

to the real situation that now elicits it.”³¹ This is similar to one of the driving forces behind Jewish *Halakah*, i.e., to render Torah relevant to changing cultural circumstances.³² In short, we are asking how the author takes account of the shifting reader-text relation, and concluding that later commentary ‘about’ a text, because it is directed towards a different audience, compromises the authority of that commentary. The parables noted above, where the application appendage fails to match the structure of the parable, are a case in point.

The third issue is that later commentary is written in a different literary form. This brings up the question of how meaning is tied to literary form, and if the same meaning can be carried by a different form. Narrative and commentary represent different genres, each with a structure that is designed to ‘do’ something different. Narrative is designed to create an event, while commentary is designed to produce an explanation. The former uses ‘event’ language while the latter generally uses propositional language (see below). Given that each has a different purposeful design, we can now refine our question: is it possible to code the meaning of event language in the form of propositional language? If it is, then *narrative is little more than an ornamental way of communicating meaning, and perhaps should be discarded in favor of more exact propositional language*. This was the path that positivism took in denigrating poetry, metaphors, and the like.³³

But, in fact, event language is different from propositional language. This does not mean that we support a ‘two language’ concept—which we rejected in Chapter 5. The two are not different at the level of compositing elements: both use nouns, verbs, logical connectors, figures of speech, and speech acts. All of these can be found, for example, in the scientific description of a plant as well as in a story about one’s trip to the store. Indeed, one could rearrange the elements of either one to produce the other! This means that the difference is not at the level of compositing elements at all, but in the organization of those elements. Certain organizations result in the emergent qualities associated with a narrative: plot, character, tone, temporal sequencing, and the like. Other do not.

Now, the astute reader might still object, noting that a scientific description could include temporal/causal sequencing, as in a description of a plant’s growth. Our response is that, indeed, this could be a narrative . . . though it is still different from a literary narrative. Again, we return to the design. The scientist

31 Walter Ong, “Text as Interpretation: Mark and After,” *Semeia* 39 (1987), 12.

32 For example, consider how the Sabbath law about “work” is rendered applicable to a seafaring context: how far a ship can go in a harbor (m. Erubin 4.2–3).

33 Cf. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Chapter 11.

organizes the compositing elements *to show the dynamic processes by which a plant grows*, so that the reader ends up with ‘facts.’ But the literary author organizes her elements *to involve the reader in the dynamic processes of the events themselves*, so that the reader ends up with ‘experiences.’ Consider Walton’s description of a person watching a horror movie: “Moreover, the fear symptoms that Charles does exhibit are not symptoms of a mere suspicion . . . They are symptoms of the certainty of grave and immediate danger . . .”³⁴ Each type organizes the compositing elements with a different purposeful design, so that different emergent qualities arise.

Let us turn these insights back to the topic at hand. The form of literary narrative is designed to create events and experiences for the reader, while that of commentary is to describe and explain the meaning of the earlier text. This is easily seen in the *Parable of the Workers* (Mt. 20:1–16), where the explanation by itself (“So the last will be first and the first will be last”) carries none of the emotional content of feeling cheated and being treated unfairly. The author may attempt to bring ‘the meaning of the event’ into propositional language, but this description is always reductionistic, partial, and selective. Commentary is not a simple repetition of the narrative in different language, and so cannot be considered the ‘ground truth’ for a narrative . . . or any different genre.

In the end, these three issues suggest a variety of problematic connections between an author’s text and her later commentary. The commentary is written by a different author, to a different context, and in a different genre. While these issues are problematic, we are not suggesting that commentary be discarded. The later-author is still connected to the earlier-author through a temporal chain of memory, the new context does not obliterate the memory of the original context, and the different genre still carries some of the information of the original. Because of this, an author’s commentary still constitutes a voice in the discussion and, in our evaluation, even a privileged voice. But it is not an absolute voice, and cannot be accepted as ground truth. Lyas summarizes our concerns:

Here we need to distinguish between the claim that we may need knowledge of intention properly to characterize an action and the claim that agents are the most reliable sources of information about their intentions.³⁵

34 Walton, “Fearing Fictionally,” 178.

35 Colin Lyas, “Wittgensteinian Intentions,” in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 141–142. Also cf. William Nelles: “The point is that the author’s critique of his own work is not necessarily to be privileged

Or, as Schalkwyk has quipped: "Here we trust the tale, not the teller."³⁶

Conclusion 1.0

To this point, we have examined the traditional ways of 'taking account' of the author-text relation, with an emphasis on locating the subjective elements of the author's language. Each of the underlying mechanisms utilizes assumptions that are deeply problematic. Yet the mechanisms of biography, way of living, and future commentary still provide something of value. They provide insights that would otherwise be unavailable, especially in texturing the author's meaning, making sense of vague sections, positing psychological influences, and resolving ambiguities. In other words, *they provide non-trivial information for the reader who attempts to create a more complete account of the text*. It is clear that these mechanisms cannot be relied upon to provide ground truth, but it is just as clear that they ought not to be discarded. So how are we to proceed?

Easy Problems (Using Conventionalism)

The central problem is that the author reproduces bits of her subjectivity in the text, though she is often unaware of these elements. The author's experience may have created a subjective attachment which seems so 'obvious' in her experience, that she never appreciates the need to explain it. At other times, the author may recognize her material as 'other,' and attempt to make these elements understandable. For example, the author may recognize that she has created a new figure of speech or a new paradigm, and so places special 'explanatory' additions. But the central point, for the reader, is that all reproductions of subjectivity create a disjunction.

A disjunction occurs when the reader applies standard language conventions to the text (conventionalism), only to find that certain elements remain

over that of other critics . . . Such remarks by writers should be considered as coming from them as *historical* readers, to be evaluated against those of other *historical* readers and valued to the degree that they can help us approximate the judgments of the *implied* reader. Some *authors* are very good readers of their own works, while others are not." ("Historical and Implied Authors and Readers," 36; italics mine). Similarly Gary Iseminger, "An Intentional Demonstration?" in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 93.

36 David Schalkwyk, "Giving Intention its Due?" *Style* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 319.

'unaccounted for' or suggest that 'something is missed.' The reader's application of standard language creates bits of meaning that resist integration (textual resistance) and create unfulfilled expectations. As readers assume that the text was designed to be understandable (publishing behavior), they turn to the language of the intended audience for resolution. This rather mundane point is actually quite central, for two reasons.

First, it means that readers begin with the assumption that the disjunction is an epistemological issue and not an ontological one. Epistemological disjunctions are, in theory, resolvable, while ontological ones are not. For example, when one comes to an ambiguous phrase, the epistemological evaluation is that the ambiguity was unintended, and so may be resolved by accessing further information.³⁷ But the ontological evaluation is that the ambiguity was intended, and so cannot be resolved by any means: there is no reason to even try. Given the assumption that published texts are designed to be understandable, *the initial evaluation is that disjunctions are epistemological in nature*, and so one turns to various resources for resolution. This reader begins with the initial confidence that ambiguity, vagueness, resistance, and disjunctions can (at least partially) be resolved. On the other hand, ontological evaluations are generally conclusions of exclusion: when resources are exhausted, then the reader assumes that the author planned for the phrase to be ambiguous, so that no further examination need occur.³⁸

Second, it suggests that readers, who used conventional language in creating the disjunction, still turn to the resources of conventional language to resolve that disjunction. They do not immediately turn to materials outside of the text, such as biographical events or way of living materials. Rather, they apply language resources that are designed for resolving such issues.

Let us examine this by turning to a figure of speech that is designed to create a disjunction in the language system, namely that of a malapropism. In a malapropism, the fully competent and skilled author applies a word whose standard use does not make sense in its context. The author does this in a particular way. She (implied authorA) constructs the language so that her reader (authorial audience), will anticipate a particular word. But instead of supplying this word, she applies a word that both shares phonemes with the expected word and does not make sense in its context. She does this for humorous effect,

37 Cf. John Searle, "Literary Theory and Its Discontents," *New Literary History* 25, no. 3 (Summer 1994): 648.

38 This is not the only path to ontological disjunctions. For example, when an author routinely engages in deliberate ambiguity, the reader may well jump to this conclusion without feeling the need to exhaust all other possibilities.

anticipating that the reader will recognize both the expected word and its connection to the supplied word.

For example, in Shakespeare's play *Much Ado About Nothing*, the audience is introduced to the recalcitrant criminal Borachio, and his accuser Dogberry. When Borachio's crimes are recited, Dogberry says to him: "Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this."³⁹ Something is clearly amiss here. After the recitation of crimes and the anticipation of condemnation, the reader expects 'everlasting' to be followed by 'damnation,' and is surprised to find 'redemption.' Shakespeare anticipated that his audience would recognize this as a malapropism and find humor in its use. This evaluation is substantiated by finding that Dogberry's speech is routinely peppered with malapropisms, so that his character has the trait of 'language incompetence.'

But how does the naïve (first time) reader reduce this bit of newness? Here we turn to engage Davidson's discussion on malapropisms. Davidson is concerned with how readers actually read, especially when that reading includes non-conventional uses of language. He states that readers begin with a standard grasp of language conventions, which he calls a "prior theory" of interpretation.⁴⁰ He notes that authors normally write with this in mind, but also that the author may ignore these readerly expectations. The author may engage in non-conventional uses of language, and at such a point she expects the reader to recognize that a disjunction has occurred, and then to cast about for a means of resolving that disjunction. Davidson calls this a "passing theory" of interpretation. He summarizes the case: "For the speaker, the prior theory is what he believes the interpreter's prior theory to be, while his passing theory is the theory he intends the interpreter to use."⁴¹ The author then provides literary cues in the text, designed to aid the reader in developing this passing theory. As Puolakka summarizes:

39 *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act IV, scene 2.

40 David Davidson, "A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs," in *The Philosophy of Language*, 4th ed., ed. A.P. Martinich (New York: Oxford, 2001), 479. Davidson's argument is directed against those who only have a formal theory of conventions (language is only prior conventions). His conclusion, based on an examination of malapropisms, is that language conventions are insufficient for the task, even to the point that "what interpreter and speaker share, to the extent that communication succeeds, is not learned and so is not a language governed by rules or conventions known to speaker and interpreter in advance" (Ibid., 482). We simply note Davidson has carried his argument too far. After all, a malapropism only occurs if the surrounding language is so conventional that the reader *expects a word that he doesn't find, and finds a word that he neither expected nor fits*.

41 Ibid., 480.

While linguistic history and past usages do not limit what meanings can be intended, they do determine *the clues that the speaker must give in order to make his novel utterances interpretable for the receiver*.⁴²

Now let us outline how this process occurs.

Our model reader begins with the construction of an ideal reader, and in this role does begin with a prior theory as tied to that culture's literary institutions. At this stage, he is using a form of conventionalism, as tied to the linguistic and literary context of the intended audience. But when he encounters "everlasting redemption," he recognizes a language disjunction . . . though he does not yet know the cause of that disjunction. Upon recognition, the reader engages in a series of guesses to resolve this disjunction. Did the author make a spelling error? Is she employing an archaic or idiosyncratic meaning for the words? Is she using a figure of speech? Is she referring to some private experience? Does she intend to confuse?

In order to resolve this disjunction, the reader begins with the assumptions of conventionalism, namely that the author chose to write with the standard forms of public language, and was a skilled and competent user of that language. This is because our reader holds to the yet deeper assumption that the published text was designed to be understandable, meaning that that reader believes that the author generally followed standard language usage.⁴³ *These assumptions stratify the reader's guesses, so that they are not randomly applied, but follow a pattern.* Negatively, the reader does not begin with guesses that violate conventionalism: he does not speculate that the author used 'redemption' in an idiosyncratic way (violates 'standard uses') or that the author did not know what 'redemption' meant (violates 'competent user'). Positively, the reader organizes his guesses under conventional uses of language, beginning with more likely possibilities and then moving to less likely ones.

42 Kalle Puolakka, "Literature, Ethics, and Richard Rorty's Pragmatist Theory of Interpretation," *Philosophia* 36 (2008): 36, accessed July 11, 2013, doi: 10.1007/s11406-007-9091-7; italics mine.

43 The more complete set of assumptions are: (1) writing is an intentional act, so that the text is "about" something; (2) the text is a reproduction of the author's voice, so that an ethics of reading applies; (3) the published text is designed to be understandable by the intended audience, so that the reader expects the author to have used standard language in a competent way (implicit social contract of communication); and (4) disjunctions in the text are epistemological in nature, so that they are theoretically resolvable with the resources available in language. Thus, the reader initially turns to the resources of that public language for resolution.

So our reader might begin with the guess that this represents a common figure of speech (e.g., metaphor), an unusual use of the word 'redemption,' or a regional dialect. When these fail to adequately resolve the disjunction, the reader might turn to uncommon figures of speech (e.g., malapropism), archaic uses of the word, or usage within a specialized speech community. These various solutions fit nicely within conventionalism. Indeed, one could almost say that these strategies are conventional, as they are based on *standardized ways that authors misapply language*. The most common misapplications are 'figures of speech,' which are non-standard uses of words that occur in conventional forms. A straightforward example is the simile: 'x is like y.'

Dogberry's use of "eternal redemption" is a case in point. When the reader comes to "Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting . . .," he expects to see the word 'damnation' or 'punishment.' The surrounding language, in its conventional usage and in the story's context, creates this expectation. Instead, the reader finds a word that does not meet this expectation, and so does not seem to fit. The opening strategy is to begin with common figures of speech and unusual uses of words, only to find that none resolve the disjunction in a satisfactory way: it is not a metaphor in form, and there is no unusual use of 'redemption' that seems to fit. The reader then moves to uncommon figures of speech, where he comes to the notion of a malapropism, and the resolution seems obvious . . . at which point the reader laughs and moves on. In this way, a malapropism is not a private language, it is not grasped by luck, and the reduction to meaning is not mysterious.⁴⁴

It is important to recognize that most of this 'testing and applying' occurs implicitly and preconsciously. Nevertheless, it is essential to address this ordering of guesses, in order to avoid beginning with exotic strategies, and so justify crazy meanings. After all, if there were no 'general approach,' than the reader might just as well start by assuming that 'redemption' is a misspelling of 'excommunication,' or that it was used idiosyncratically for 'penance,' or that Shakespeare was an incompetent user of language! Such can be refuted by a

44 This is a reaction to Davidson's: "... derived by wit, luck and wisdom from a private vocabulary and grammar, knowledge of the ways people get their point across, and rules of thumb for figuring out what deviations from the dictionary are most likely" (Davidson, "A Nice Derangement," 482). Indeed, Davidson's statement gets to our point: his initial elements ("wit, luck, wisdom . . . private vocabulary and grammar") suggest a non-rational form of guesswork, while his closing element ("what deviations from the dictionary are most likely") suggest a rational form. Our suggestion is that the reader begins with the latter (rational) path: he begins with the assumption of standard language, under the expectation that the text was designed to be understandable, and looks for common figures of speech first. Only later does he attempt exotic solutions (see text).

careful reading of the text, for Shakespeare does not ‘misspell’ any other character’s words—only those of Dogberry—which makes these solutions unlikely.

Finally, after recognizing the disjunction and posing a solution, the reader will, at least implicitly, attempt to validate this solution. Attempts at validation are best accomplished by returning to the language of the text, to see if this solution brings greater coherence and is supported by redundancy.

The reader checks for coherence by examining how well the solution fits the disjunctive component into near elements (the sentence) and far elements (themes, plot lines, characterizations, and the like).⁴⁵ We might call this a search for ‘near coherence’ and ‘far coherence,’ as part of the project of creating a thoroughgoing design. In our example, the reader validates the solution of a malapropism by finding that ‘damnation’ fits into the near context of Dogberry’s attack on Borachio. This solution also provides far coherence, as it fits into Dogberry’s general speech pattern of ‘language ineptness’ (a character trait). In short, this solution brings coherence to multiple threads in the surrounding context. On the other hand, the solution of an authorial misspelling does not, for these ‘misspellings’ only occur in Dogberry’s lines. This suggests that these misuses of language are non-accidental and non-random: a specific design is at work. A similar analysis eliminates the solution of an ‘idiosyncratic meaning.’

The reader may also check his solution for redundancy. Language is characterized by a certain level of redundancy, so that the use of any single word is partially repeated in the surrounding context.⁴⁶ Consider the follow sentence: “Please get me a xhannyth, for mine ran out of ink and I have a lot of writing to do.” Sufficient redundancy exists in this sentence for the reader to suggest the meaning of ‘pen’ from the surrounding words of ‘ink’ and ‘writing’ (syntagmatic associations). Authors who use speech creatively know this, and place sufficient cues for the reader to expect certain kinds of words. Indeed, a malapropism relies on this redundancy! But redundancy can also be used to support or reject a solution. In our example, the surrounding words of ‘villain’ and

45 Coherence is tied to the notion of “fitted-ness,” that is, the expectation that the parts fit together into a larger whole, which is the “thing” that the text is about (intentional object). This notion is rooted in the twin notions that writing is an intentional act, so that there is an “about-ness” to the text (Chapter 2), and that the author desires to be understandable, so that this “about-ness” can—at least in theory—be had by the reader. However fitted-ness is an indefinite concept as coherence is never complete, but is determined by the reader’s judgment. We will examine this notion further in Chapter 8.

46 Moisés Silva writes: “In particular, we have become aware of the need for redundancy in communication” (*Biblical Words and their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983], 154.

'be condemned' in the context of an unrepentant attitude, contain redundant elements for a limited number of concepts, including 'damnation,' and so add support to the solution of a malapropism.

Obviously, there is no way to offer an 'absolute' meaning or 'final' validation for a disjunction. As a manifestation of the author's subjectivity, such are by definition irresolvable at any final level. Indeed, a disjunction is no more subject to final resolution than is language itself (cf. *Excursus* to Chapter 6). Rather, readers reach a point, *based on their judgment*, where sufficient understanding exists, sufficient coherence is restored, and sufficient redundancy occurs. We will return to this issue of 'sufficiency of judgment' in the next chapter.

Finally, it is important to note that these sequential activities of recognizing disjunctions, posing solutions, and validating solutions are generally done implicitly. Readers often do not even recognize what they have done, especially when a relatively common figure of speech is encountered. For example, the solution to 'The seasons of life' or 'The dawn of civilization' is nearly automatic, as are the biblical metaphors of "You are the light of the world" and "God is my fortress." Some of these metaphors are so commonplace that they are classified as dead metaphors. But when readers come upon an unusual metaphor, such as "They are water-less clouds" (Jude 12), they implicitly reach for the more likely solution (it is a metaphor, even if a bit unusual), and not for an exotic solution (it is a neologism). In short, the full system does not become apparent until encountering a truly unusual figure of speech (e.g., hypocatastasis, as used in Ps. 22:16: "dogs are all around me") or a major cultural disjunction (Jesus putting mud in someone's eyes).

Let us stop and summarize, before moving to increasingly murky waters: some subjective elements of an author's language can, at least partially, be reduced to understanding. The place to begin is with the resources inherent in language, as this is tied to the assumptions underlying conventionalism. Some creative misuses fit into standard forms, such as figures of speech, and so are designed to be understandable. They do not involve a private vocabulary or grammar, but are based on guesses that are preconditioned by the intended audience's culture (supplies the standard figures) and the reader's expectations (of what should occur next in the text). Indeed, the author rarely expects the reader to apply a private language. Shakespeare designed his text so that the application of 17th century language conventions would make sense of the whole, even though a single word ('redemption') was used non-conventionally. Principles of coherence and redundancy can be utilized in the validation of such guesses, and can further be validated through an intersubjective consensus among readers.

Harder Problems (Exotic Solutions)

However, this strategy will not resolve all disjunctions. When, in the reader's judgment, there is insufficient resolution, the reader turns to increasingly less common and more exotic solutions. As the reader moves toward the exotic, he begins veering away from the assumptions of conventionalism. Indeed, at some point the reader strikes down various of these assumptions. The necessity for this move comes as no surprise, as conventionalism is grounded in the notion that authors only use language in standard ways (hyper-normal usage), and so limits the boundaries of subjective creation. But, the author may use her subjectivity to create a newness that is no longer part of 'standard' language. When readers encounter such a disjunction, they find that it resists the assumptions and methods of conventionalism. At some point readers recognize that they are dealing with non-standard language, and so must reach for solutions that are not permitted by conventionalism.

For example, readers may encounter a word whose use does not fit any present or archaic usage (for the discussion here, we will only examine an idealized 'single-point' disjunction, and save more complex disjunctions for the next section). Again we return to our example of the worker who cut into an 'empty' gasoline drum, only to find that it blew up on him. This caused him to reshape the categories of 'empty,' so that it had the private attachment of 'still reactive.' That worker might now write the sentence: "The empty gasoline can is in danger of exploding." When someone with the traditional categories of 'empty' reads this, it creates a disjunction that is not resolvable under the assumptions of conventionalism. Similarly with an author who deliberately misspells a word in order to create a neologism (e.g., Derrida's *différance*). Biblical examples are also easy to find, such as the specialized uses of *apostolos* (apostle), *ekklēsia* (church), and *euangelion* (gospel).⁴⁷

For an extended example, let us return to the autistic child's use of 'siding': "They're having a meal, and then they're finishing and siding the table."⁴⁸ In this example, the word 'siding' creates a disjunction for the reader. In our approach, the reader begins with the assumptions of conventionalism (the author is a skilled and competent user of language, and chooses to write from within the standard forms and uses of public language). These assumptions stratify the guesses that are applied. The reader begins with likely possibilities,

47 Esp. see *Ibid.*, Chapter 3, on semantic change.

48 Joanne Volden and Catherine Lord, "Neologisms and Idiosyncratic Language in Autistic Speakers," *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 21, no. 2 (1991): 118.

by applying common figures of speech and unusual uses of words. But these do not produce a satisfactory solution. He next turns to unlikely possibilities, such as hypocatastasis, an archaic use of the word, or a malapropism, with the same result. Each application does create a meaning, but none of these result in sufficient coherence or redundancy in our reader's judgment.

At this point the reader *rescinds the assumptions of conventionalism*, and assumes that 'siding' is not being used in a standard way. This opens up a set of increasingly exotic possibilities. Perhaps the author was not a competent user of language, and had never learned the standard use of 'siding.' Perhaps the author had a 'private' meaning for this word (idiosyncratic usage). Perhaps the author did not write with the standard forms of English, but was creating a new figure of speech. Perhaps the author was not a skilled user, and accidentally wrote 'siding' when she intended to write 'polishing.'

The resolution of such a disjunction requires several specialized processes, especially if this disjunction represents a form of newness due to the author's subjectivity. The present case appears to be a single point disjunction in otherwise normal language usage. In single point disjunctions, the reader can use the 'normalcy' of the surrounding language as a resource for recreating the author's usage. Here one can access the redundant elements of language in order to delimit, and so set restraints upon, usage. Again, consider our example of 'xhannath' above (earlier we used this to verify usage, while here we are using it to create the boundaries of usage). The usage of xhannath is limited by the surrounding words of 'ink' and 'writing,' and its grammatical placement as a noun. The reader may use these as restrictions on possible usage, suggesting that xhannath is an object (noun) that uses ink in the process of writing, and so is a type of 'pen.'

Similarly, 'siding' is somehow attached to, and even reproduced in, the surrounding words of 'meal' and 'table,' as well as in the temporal structuring generated by 'then' and 'finishing.' The reader concludes that 'siding' has something to do with a table where a meal is served, and is something that occurs immediately after meals are finished. This places limits on the possible meanings, restricting 'siding' to table-events that occur at the end of a meal, which might include clearing the dishes, putting the food away, or leaving the table. But it is not about putting vinyl on the side of a house or having a train change tracks (the standard uses for 'siding').

Another specialized process involves the circularity of language. Words are used to construct the whole meaning of the sentence, and this 'whole meaning' may then be used to texture the individual words. Of course, this is a variant on the hermeneutic circle. Using circularity, the whole meaning of the sentence

is constructed from the words we know, and this whole meaning provides the categories for the word we do not know. To use this process, the reader needs access to a larger section of the text (more than just the sentence in which 'siding' occurs). So let us assume that rest of the paragraph reads: "After all, the dishes are dirty. After siding, the dishes can be cleaned, and then can be put away." Here the 'whole' is reconstructed as the process of clearing and cleaning the dishes after a meal. 'Siding' is simply one of the actions appropriate to that process, and more specifically is that action that occurs after finishing the meal, but prior to the actual cleaning of the dishes. These connections suggest that 'siding' is about 'clearing the dirty dishes after a meal.' This analysis specifically excludes the standard uses of 'siding,' and creates the limits for any idiosyncratic use.

This suggests two important conclusions for our discussion. First, it suggests that language has resources to begin the reduction of non-conventional language to understanding. Subjective attachments and private meanings, when occurring as single-point disjunctions, still fit within the language system. Readers need not immediately turn to the author's biography, way of living materials, or future commentary. Second, it suggests that this reduction is always incomplete. This is because none of these processes *directly reduces the newness, but only does so indirectly through the surrounding language*. We have no way to grasp 'the new thing itself' in language. 'Siding' may come with a grammatical form and redundant language attachments, but it does not come with some inner fund of meaning that impresses itself on the reader (see Quine in Chapter 6). While specialized processes create boundaries for newness, they never get to the intentional object that is in the mind of the author. Thus, by definition, some element of newness always remains irreducible. As a manifestation of authorial subjectivity, this comes as no surprise.

Now, since irreducibility is a characteristic of newness, some might ask: "Why try?" One might as well apply the language and culture of one's choice: irreducibility makes the choice irrelevant. But this brings us back to ethics. Our model reader begins with the desire to 'hear the author's voice,' so that interpretation is rooted in an ethic that values the author as a subject, and attempts to avoid manipulation... even while realizing that such goals can never be fully realized. The fact that some irreducibility remains is no objection, *as this problem plagues all communication, and so is attenuated as a deciding factor*. The fact that some irreducibility remains does not mean that attempts at understanding should be abandoned, but only that an element of humility should permeate all interpretive efforts. Thus our reader begins with the language and social institutions of the intended audience, and a recognition of limitations.

Hardest Problems (Private Solutions)

The strategies that we've outlined to date may still not resolve all disjunctions. The next step in complexity occurs when the disjunctions are not single point ones, but stretch across sentences, as in the generation of characters, plots, themes, genre, and the like. For example, imagine the first person to encounter 'objective narration' or 'stream of consciousness narration.' Or consider the often opaque images in poetry. For our example, let us begin with a poem by R. Hass, which is about the effects of old memories on one's life, and ends in the following lines: "... & all that terror / in the house / & barely, only barely, / a softball / falling toward me / like a moon."⁴⁹ For this example, let us assume that our reader is a member of the intended audience, so as to simplify the issues (as a member of the intended audience, the actual reader is already an ideal reader). These lines create a disjunction for our reader, where his normal application of language feels inadequate, as if something 'more' is being said.

In order to get at this 'more,' our model reader again begins by engaging the general strategy of conventionalism: he assumes that the author was a skilled and competent user of that language, and that she chose to write from within the standard forms and uses. At this point in the process, our reader also assumes that the obscurity is unintentional, making it an epistemological issue, and so looks for ways to understand the text. So our reader turns to likely possibilities, and finds the form of a simile, but also finds that the point of comparison (*tertium comparationis*) is obscure. How is "a softball / falling toward me" like "a moon"? Both are round objects and both may be said to 'fall,' but this feels inadequate.

When these applications of conventional language fail to produce a satisfactory result, the reader strikes down the assumptions of conventionalism and turns to contemplate the exotic. Here the reader turns to those specialized mechanisms available in language, of circularity and redundancy, as examined above. However, our earlier examples were 'single-point reproductions of subjectivity.' Such are generally reducible to understanding as they maintain conventional connections to the words around them. In the present example, the reproductions are so extensive that few conventional connections are available for these mechanisms to work on. Subjective elements are attached to other subjective elements, so that redundancy (based on connections to conventional elements) is less helpful. Indeed, the present interconnections are so oblique that a 'whole' for circularity cannot be easily constructed.

49 Robert Hass, "House," in *The Language of Life: A Festival of Poets*, Bill Moyers, ed. James Haba (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 196–197.

In short, these bits are not reducible by any of the means we've addressed to date. They are recognizable as disjunctions, but a careful examination of the language, along with the cultural institutions to which it is indexed, does not allow the reader to adequately characterize the text. The reader who only utilizes language and its resources can go no further, but can only assume that these bits are non-reducible (intentional obscurity).

At such a juncture we turn to resources that are outside of the text. This is based on the realization that, at times, the characterization of an act (text) may require materials that are beyond the boundaries of that act. As Lyas writes: "Some of the things that are true of an action or of the result of an action may be detectable *only if we have knowledge that scrutiny of that action alone could not give.*"⁵⁰

Let us illustrate this by returning to the example of two people playing chess, where one of the players looks furtively about, distracts the other player, and then quickly moves his bishop horizontally. An observer might characterize this move as 'cheating.' In doing so, he has reasoned from the observable actions to the player's mental state: the player's move was a result of his desire to break the rules for personal gain ('cheating' carries this intentional state, which distinguishes it from a 'mistake' or a 'blunder'). He assumes that a careful examination of the player's behavior allows him to accurately characterize that player's desire and intentional act. However, as we concluded above (way of living materials), behavioral evidence is insufficient to reliably predict 'the' cause of any behavior. Accessing a larger context may narrow down the possibilities, but it cannot eliminate all possibilities. In short, *the interpretation of observable behavior is always underdetermined.* The reader may comb through the text multiple times, carefully locating the language in the culture of the intended audience, and still have unresolved disjunctions.

At this point, the observer of the chess game may turn to materials that are 'outside' of the game itself. First, he might ask the player to explain his move (commentary). If the player responds that he was distracted by a nearby traffic accident—hence the furtive look—this would give limited credence to a non-cheating conclusion. Second, he may turn to the player's historical actions and attitudes (way of living materials). If the player is known to be meticulously honest and have no history of cheating, this would add some credence to a non-cheating conclusion. These references, to authorial commentary and way

50 Lyas, "Wittgensteinian Intentions," 141; italics mine. Cf. Wittgenstein's "broken brake" parable: "If a mechanism is meant to act as a brake, but for some reason does not slow down the motion of the machine, then the purpose of the mechanism cannot be found out immediately from it and from its effect" (*The Wittgenstein Reader*, 88).

of living materials, are clearly not definitive, but they do add weight to one or another solution.

Applying this to Hass' poem, the reader turns to authorial commentary, way of living materials, and biographic data. However, the way in which this is done is critical. *First*, the reader does not engage these materials at an earlier stage, as these are based on dubious assumptions, as outlined above. The text was designed by the author for a reading public, and not for that subset of 'the reading public' who have intimate knowledge of the author's history and habits. Indeed, applying historical materials compromises the notion of an implied authorA, by eliding the differences between the actual author and the implied authorA, and so limits the scope of authorial subjectivity.

Second, these materials are used specifically for the weighing of possibilities posited by conventionalism. Conventionalism is the base, as here the reader best accounts for the author-text relation, and utilizes language as the author expected for the reader to utilize language. In terms of our communication model (Chapter 6), the reader fashions the node connecting the author-system with the reader-system, so as to create a correspondence between the implied reader and the authorial audience. When this reader creates multiple possible meanings from the text, external materials may be used to weigh one over the other, but they are not used to posit options *which cannot be supported by the conventionalist reading*. The reader of "a softball / falling toward me / like a moon" does not bring in the author's romantic life and state that this is a reference to 'falling' in love, or bring in the author's economic ineptness and state that this is a reference to 'falling fortunes.'

Third, these materials are used with varying degrees of credibility. The use of these materials is based on problematic assumptions, but some are more problematic than others. We outlined these above, and so can simply summarize here: the material that has the best claim to credibility is authorial commentary, followed by way of living materials, and least of all by biographical events.

Fourth, any conclusions from the use of such materials should be confirmed by other means, and even then are only provisional. A conclusion is partially confirmed when it brings greater coherence to the disparate bits (near coherence and far coherence), and when it is supported in the redundancy of the surrounding language.

So, how might the reader approach "a softball / falling toward me / like a moon"? The reader begins with the assumptions of conventionalism, and produces a small universe of possible meanings: the memory of trying to catch an impossibly high softball, the softness of the softball which is like the softness of the moon, the dream-like state of a ball that slowly falls, the falling of

memories that ‘shine’ like the moon, the sense of loss that accompanies falling, etc. None of these quite seem to fit, in the sense of bringing the various elements together in a synthesis that makes sense within the context of the poem. Next the reader strikes down the assumptions of conventionalism, and turns to exotic solutions (e.g., idiosyncratic language, neologisms, archaisms, misspellings), but, again, without satisfactory results. Finally our reader turns to private authorial materials, beginning with authorial commentary in the form of memoirs, interviews, introductions, and the like.

As it is, Hass did grant an interview, where he was specifically asked him about this confusing image. Hass answered that the image involved:

... the hypnotic, trancelike pleasure of those early spring nights when you could play ball right up to and through dinnertime ... I think I was remembering those moments that are moments of pure escape ... that sense of the looming softball in the twilight as it descends into your hands.⁵¹

It is clear that Hass has an experience in memory that is informing his poetry, but the subjective component is so difficult to express in language that even his explanation feels like a riddle. Nevertheless, this commentary does: (1) fit into the possibilities posed by our conventionalist reading, (2) bring coherence to some elements of the poem, and (3) is suggested by certain redundant elements (an earlier line about remembering). Thus, provisionally, the reader might accept that the intentional object is something like: that memory of watching a softball ever so slowly fall in the deepening twilight, which captures all of our attention and, as a moment of sensual bliss, gives us a moment of escape from the terrors of our old life.

Many of our biblical examples, in the above sections on biography, way of living materials, and future commentary, fit here, and are worthy of review. However, here we will attend to the text of Mk. 1:21–28, as this passage engages many of the problems addressed to date. Herein, the author creates a subjective addition to the word ‘authority’ (*exousia*), and uses this addition to produce new connections within the narrative. For this example, we will assume that the reader has already created an ideal reader with appropriate 1st century cultural competencies. This pericope has three general sections, which we will address in turn: (1) opening comments on Jesus’ teaching, (2) an exorcism, and (3) closing comments on Jesus’ teaching/exorcism.

51 Hass, cited in Moyers, *The Language of Life*, 197–198.

Section 1: Opening Comments on Jesus' Teaching

This text opens with Jesus teaching in the synagogue “as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (1:22). The naïve reader has, to this point in the narrative, encountered no miracle stories or exorcisms, and only minimal teaching (1:18). So, how is Jesus’ teaching different? The text does not make the point of the comparison clear. As Gundry writes: “... Mark tells what feature of the scribes’ teaching betrays a lack of authority no more than he tells what feature of Jesus’ teaching exhibits authority.”⁵² Our model reader, who began with the assumptions of conventionalism, recognizes that the text is addressing some issue of importance—a distinction in teaching style and content—but with insufficient material to clarify this distinction. Our reader also assumes that the author desired to be understandable, and so considers this to represent a form of epistemological vagueness that can be resolved through the acquisition of further materials.

But what further materials does the reader access? Several types present themselves. The first type is the next several sentences (in this case, the entire pericope to which *exousia* is attached). This was the path explored above (example of ‘siding’), where we looked at the next sentences for further redundant information. It is certainly legitimate to read the following sentences as part of the immediate context. But looking beyond that is problematic, for it subverts the temporal development of the narrative argument. A text’s effects are often tied to a sequential unfolding, so that knowing later events blocks the expected responses.⁵³ In its most extreme form, this would be like reading the last chapter of a novel first.

52 Robert Gundry, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 74. Cf. France: “Here no specific details are given of what it was in Jesus’ teaching which stirred such a reaction” (R.T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002], 102).

53 The temporal flow of narratives (a diachronic reading) creates effects and meanings which are lost when the sequence is removed (a synchronic reading). For example, Mark has two feeding stories, which are similar at the structural level (Mk. 6:30–44, 8:1–9). In a diachronic reading, the first one informs the reader about what will happen in the second one (of course he can feed them!), and textures the reader’s response to the disciples (they did not learn from the first story, and so manifest unreasonable and recalcitrant unbelief!). The author will make this point clear when the disciples again argue over not having bread (Mk. 8:16), by having Jesus chide them over the earlier feeding stories (8:17–21). Ignoring the temporal flow creates a different effect, as readers no longer “look forward...look back...decide...change our decisions...form expectations...are shocked by their nonfulfillment” (Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” in *Reader-Response Criticism*, ed. Jane Tompkins [Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980], 54).

For the present text, looking too far ahead might suggest a focus on the interpretation and uses of Torah, as seen in the controversy stories of Chapters 2 and 7. However, the immediate context makes no mention of this kind of controversy—it does not directly engage issues of interpretation or tradition. Instead it makes a connection to an exorcism story! Further, the author will emphasize this connection by adding an *exousia* at the end of the pericope, so creating an *inclusio* around the exorcism story. Thus, as Dillon notes: "... a coherent argument is forged after all between the inaugural exorcism and the acclamations which frame it."⁵⁴ Or, as Twelftree notes: "What is 'new' is that Jesus' teaching is realized or incarnated in exorcisms."⁵⁵

So how does this exorcism story tie into "as one having authority, and not as the scribes"? Initially the reader assumes that the author (implied authorA) used 'authority' in the standard way (conventionalism). The ideal reader finds that, in the 1st century, *exousia* generally emphasized the right to command a person, but didn't address the issue of 'power to coerce' that person. Dillon draws out the distinction between *exousia* (authority, right) and *dynamis* (power), as "the distinction between right and ability, between the warrant to do something and the intrinsic capacity to do it."⁵⁶ When this standard use of *exousia* is applied, it suggests that Jesus has the right to command the demon to leave, without addressing his ability to coerce the demon to leave.

However, this creates a disjunction, for in 1st century cognitive maps, humans were considered lower on the scale of being than demons.⁵⁷ As such, humans have no right to command a demon, which is why exorcists of that time either accessed a being that did have the right (prayer to God) or some powerful object (amulets, root).⁵⁸ Since Jesus-the-man lacks the authority to

54 Richard Dillon, "As One Having Authority (Mark 1:22): The Controversial Distinction of Jesus' Teaching," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (January 1995): 98.

55 Graham Twelftree, *Jesus The Miracle Worker* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 59.

56 Dillon, "As One Having Authority," 97; cf. fn. 19.

57 Cf. Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1992), 181; and Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2001), 104–105.

58 Here we need to make the distinction between three types of miracle workers. In the first type, the miracle worker has inherent right (*exousia*) to command the demon; s/he is higher on the scale of being, and so orders the demon without need for amulets, spells, etc. This is the type envisioned here, and is discussed below in this footnote. In the second type, the miracle worker has internal power over the demon, whether or not s/he has the right to so issue the command. It is a manifestation of power, without examining one's 'place' in nature. This miracle worker also has no need for amulets, spells, etc., and

command the demon, in what way is *exousia* related to the exorcism? At this point, the reader recognizes that *exousia* has something to do with the coordinates of teaching and exorcism, but the connections themselves remains opaque. In short, he has encountered (created) a disjunction.

A second type of further materials involves the social description of 'scribal teaching.' Such was generally characterized by citations of scripture, application of traditional authorities, use of stories, creating a fence around the law, occurring in certain places, being done from a particular position, and so on. But which elements are in view here? If we work only with the text to date—the only place of comparison for the naïve reader—then the only teaching we've encountered is Mk. 1:18: "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news." This is all that the author

is discussed in fn. 65. In the third type, the miracle worker has neither inherent right to command nor internal power over the demon, but relies out outside power in the form of amulets, incantations, prayer, roots, etc. This is the basic type in Jewish texts outside of the gospels, and is discussed in "Section 2" of this text.

The present text engages the first type, which occurs because of a human's right to command a demon, based on his/her position in the hierarchical scale of being. Position confers certain natural rights upon those who are higher, and usually includes actual power over the lower beings. Based on our research, into the interactions between humans and demons in surrounding texts, this type of exorcism does not occur in the 1st century Jewish world. A variety of counter-examples have been presented, but each has questionable relevance: (1) Test. Levi. 18:12: the new priest gives his children *exousia* to "tread" on evil spirits. But the date is 2nd century and the reference is prob. to Lk. 10:19, as suggested by Graham Twelftree, "Exorcism and the Defeat of Beliar in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011): 183. (2) Test. Sol. 5:13, 8:1, 13:7: these ref. are 2nd century, and show dependence upon Christian thinking (esp. cf. 15:10); further, note that the exorcisms in this document begin with the use of a God-given amulet, and not Solomon's inherent right. (3) various magical papyri (PGM), where "The attitude implicit and even explicit in these document is that the divine powers are subject to human orders, and should be told so in no uncertain terms" (Howard Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Society for New Testament Studies 55 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986], 109). However, following Meier, these forms show nearly "the reverse mirror image" of the gospel exorcisms, where "magic is the technical manipulation of various (often impersonal) supernatural forces or the coercion of a deity . . ." (John Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, vol. 2, The Anchor Bible Reference Library [New York: Doubleday, 1994], 549; cf. 541–552). (4) Life of Apollonius 4.20: Apollonius addresses a demon "as a master might to a cunning and shameless slave" (Flavius Philostratus, "The Life of Apollonius of Tyana," in *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*, 2nd ed., ed. David Cartlidge and David Dungan [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994], 226). But this story is much later (3rd cent.) and is non-Jewish. Thus, our conclusion stands, that humans did not have the 'right' to command demons, or was—at the very least—quite rare.

expected the reader to have at this point in the narrative. From this single example, one might suggest that Jesus' teaching is different in that he did not cite traditional authorities. So Hillyer notes that scribal teaching "argued from Scripture and tradition, and by quoting older authorities to support their teaching," but that Jesus "had spoken with freshness, directness, and in his own name..."⁵⁹ However, one must also be wary of this conclusion, as the materials to date are rather thin. Again, our model reader is hesitant to look beyond the present pericope, to later examples of Jesus' teaching.

At this point, our model reader has utilized the various tools available under the assumptions of conventionalism ("Easy Problems"). He has a general sense for the word's use, though he realizes that this use creates a disjunction in the present text. Now the reader suspends the assumptions of conventionalism, and considers more exotic solutions ("Harder Problems"). Given the skilled way in which the author has used 'authority' (creating an *inclusio* to frame the pericope), it is unlikely that the author was incompetent or unskilled in his use of this word. This suggests that the disjunction is deliberate. To explore this we will need to read further, into the exorcism part of this pericope.

Before moving on, however, we should note that some readers might, at this stage of the investigation, move to biographical, manner of living, and commentary materials. For example, the reader might turn to examine Jesus' 'normal' patterns of teaching in the gospels. This is a 'manner of living' type of study, where the consistent style of Jesus' teaching, as synthesized from various documents, is created and applied to the text at hand. Such a reader might turn to the remainder of the *Gospel of Mark*, and here find that Jesus' teaching is generally lacking in traditional citations (cf. Mk. 2:6–12, 18–22, 3:1–6), and specifically attacks the "tradition of the elders" (Mk. 7:3–13). France, writing on our pericope, moves down this path:

Here no specific details are given of what it was in Jesus' teaching which stirred such a reaction; there will be plenty of such detail later on... (which) suggests that he is already expressing some of the radical ideas, boldly contradicting accepted halakhic teaching, which will appear later...⁶⁰

59 Norman Hillyer, "Scribe," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 3, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 481. Note that others have suggested that *exousia* relates to the issue of unordained teacher vs. authoritative rabbi. Cf. discussion in William Lane, *The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 72, and C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 73–74—both of whom reject this view.

60 France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 102.

Some have expanded this further yet, by engaging issues of theological content. So Betz, writing on this passage, states:

The latter (the scribes) were guided by their teaching tradition (Matt. 7:29), whereas Jesus . . . spoke with the unique authority of the Son who alone knows the Father and who alone can reveal him (Matt. 11:27; Lk. 10:22; cf. also Matt. 28:18; Jn. 3:35; 13:3; 10:15; 17:25).⁶¹

Now, if the text had ended with this verse (1:22), such moves would be appropriate, by utilizing the methods posed under 'Hardest Problems'. Here we would follow France in limiting the materials to Mark's narrative, and looking for a consistency in the manner of Jesus' teaching. Such materials, though, can only suggest provisional conclusions, and may miss the issue entirely. Indeed, our use of the remainder of this pericope *will suggest an entirely different conclusion*. As the text did not end at 7:22, the reader should at least finish the pericope at hand before resorting to such problematic methods.

Section 2: An Exorcism

Moving forward in this pericope, we find that Jesus encounters a man with a demon, and performs a successful exorcism with the words of command: "Be silent and come out of him" (7:25). At this point the modern reader is tempted to scoff at the notion of possession. To such an audience, Jesus' commands do not constitute an exorcism, but the application of pre-scientific ignorance in order to deal with the unknown. At best, it is believed superstition, appreciated only for Jesus' caring attitude to the marginalized, and at worst as an attempt to secure his position as a healer and gain followers. However, in doing so the reader privileges his own culture over all other possible worlds (ethnocentrism). As Strecker notes: "The fact is that scientific, rational discourse, in striving for objectivity, usually has difficulty respecting the foreign quality, the otherness, of alien societies."⁶² Such risks manipulating the voice of the author, by locating the text in a different culture's symbolic universe and social institutions (that of the post-Enlightenment reader, with a physical model of causation that undergirds the institution of modern medicine).

61 Otto Betz, "Exousia," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 610.

62 Christian Strecker, "Jesus and the Demoniacs," in *The Social Setting of Jesus and The Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 119.

This not only domesticates the text, by eliminating “the sting of the strange,”⁶³ but fails to maintain any functional resemblance to the original culture’s fears (demon possession, loss of identity group, religious exclusion, social isolation, unclean status, and approaching death).

Rather, our model reader functions as an ideal reader who engages first-century Jewish culture, in order to locate this set of actions. Instead of peeling away the layers of culture in order to expose the ‘central’ meanings within (Bultmann), he enters the text through that culture’s universe, with its beliefs and institutions, as if these were the conditions under which reading occurs. Such an approach is less interested in questions of history (questioning the veracity of these events under the reader’s grasp of science, history, etc.), and more interested in questions of meaning (accepting the veracity of these events for the purpose of constructing and experiencing the story world). Only after experiencing this story world does the reader consider these other issues. These evaluative questions are the work of the actual-self, who stands outside of the story-world, deciding how to evaluate that story-world which the reading-self has experienced.

Thus, our model reader begins with a 1st century grasp of exorcism. Here he finds that an exorcism generally began with a call upon God for help (1 QapGen. 21; Tobit 3:16–17; Test. Sol. 1:5–6; Jub. 10:2–3).⁶⁴ God would then offer help in a variety of ways: directly/through an intermediary (cf. 1 QapGen. 21; Jub. 10:7; Tobit 8:3), through the impartation of special knowledge (Ant. 8.45–46; Tob. 6:17–18; Jub. 10:10–13), or through the giving of a powerful object (Test. Sol. 1:6–7; Ant. 8.47). Next, the miracle worker would act in a way appropriate to that ‘help.’ For example, where God gave special knowledge, the person simply acted on that knowledge (in *Tobit*, the angel tells Tobias to burn a fish’s liver and heart, which he then does). But the miracle worker is not viewed as acting out of inherent power or inner authority over the demon, and so does

63 Ibid., 121. Cf. Marshall Sahlins: “These people (of a different culture) have not organized their existence in answer to what has been troubling us lately . . . it makes their own cultural logics disappear . . .” (“Two or Three Things that I Know About Culture,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 5, no. 2 [September 1999]: 406; parenthesis mine).

64 First-century exorcism stories are relatively uncommon outside of the NT. France cites Kirschnner: “Despite the great amount of materials referring to exorcism/demons in the literature surveyed, there are *very few narratives available* . . . Even *fewer exorcistic figures*, to whom exorcism stories are clearly ascribed, can be found (*The Gospel of Mark*, 100–101; author’s italics). Similarly Paul Achtemeier, “Miracles in the New Testament and the Greco-Roman World,” in *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 199. Consequently, we are on somewhat shaky grounds in tying the NT stories to some theoretical institution.

not act 'on his/her own.'⁶⁵ These ideas suggest a general narrative structure or "compositional structure," which represents the typical pattern by which a religious person deals with a demon-possessed person.⁶⁶

However, the present exorcism does not follow the general structure, or any 1st century Jewish pattern, and this forms yet another disjunction for the intended audience.⁶⁷ In most exorcisms, Jesus does not receive a request for

65 This is the second type of miracle worker, from fn. 58. Here the reference is to "charismatics whose success depended entirely upon their personal force" (Graham Twelftree, "In the Name of Jesus: A Conversation with Critics," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 17 [2008]: 160). The focus is on internal power, and less on issues of 'right.' Indeed, the notion of "natural right over the demon" does not generally appear. Generally speaking, this type doesn't appear in the 1st century Jewish world. Twelftree has raised possible counter-examples, but these have questionable relevance: (1) Simeon ben Yose: this character is from a considerably later text (Babylonian Talmud); (2) *Apollonius of Tyana*: this character is much later (third century) and is non-Jewish in culture; and (3) Syrian from Palestine: this example, from Lucian of Samosata, is of questionable value, given the satirical nature of this text. Cf. the following lines from the same text: "Plenty of people besides Ion have met with spirits, by day and by night. As for me, if I have seen one apparition, I have seen a thousand . . . I am accustomed now, and think nothing of it . . ." (Lucian of Samosata, *The Liar*, trans. H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1904], 16, 17; accessed August 5, 2013, <http://lucianofsamosata.info/TheLiar.html#sthash.g6qUfQ28.dpbs>). Twelftree also poses an "intermediate" type, where David, as presented by Josephus (Ant. 6.166–168), deals with Saul's 'choking' demon. David has already had the divine (*theios*) transferred (*metabainō*) upon him, and in this state engages in prophesy and helping Saul come to himself (no exorcistic language). In short, none of these negate our claim that first-century, religious, Jewish exorcists were generally not conceived of as having "inherent" power.

66 Gerd Theissen's term (*The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983], *The Miracle Stories*, 8). My analysis suggests the following narrative structure for the religious person: possessed/afflicted person prays or asks for help—God authorizes an intermediate (angel, godly miracle worker)—the intermediate applies God's help (uses special knowledge, applies powerful substance)—the exorcism occurs (casting out, binding)—demonstration of the demon's departure—the possessed person/godly miracle worker praises God. Variants occur.

67 Most authors are hesitant to see something "new" in Jesus' exorcisms, but want his actions to sit firmly in existing cultural models. This suggests two central problems: if the text is forced into existing cultural categories, then the author is denied her subjectivity, but if the text is radically new, then Jesus' actions lack any connection to 1st century culture, and so are not understandable (either to his culture or the modern reader). Rather, it is best to recognize newness as partial: Jesus reproduces both his culture and his subjectivity in his exorcisms, so that the reader recognizes common models and disjunctive newness.

help, does not call upon God for help, does not use any rituals, and does not utilize outside powers (roots, amulets, incantations, etc.). Instead, he appears to simply act on his own, as if he had inherent authority to command the demon (*exousia*), and innate power to remove it (*dynamis? ischys?*). This formed the basis for our earlier disjunction, where humans are lower on the social hierarchy than demons, and so lack the 'inherent' power to control them.

Critically, the author *appears to expect this 'recognition of multiple disjunctions' in her audience*, for she has the onlookers in the story-world respond: "They were all amazed (*thambeō*), and kept on asking one another, 'What is this . . . He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!' " (1:27). Our model reader does no less at this point, and will continue this questioning and amazement—in solidarity with the disciples/crowd—in the following miracle stories (Mk. 4:41, 5:20, 5:42, 7:37). Indeed, the author not only presents this as a disjunction for the common folk (crowd), but even for the religious leaders, who directly ask about it: "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you the authority to do them?" (Mk. 11:28). The author even anticipates how the reader might attempt to resolve it (Mk. 3:22: "... by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.").⁶⁸ Thus it becomes clear that the author expected the reader to stumble over this story . . . it is in the design.

So how is the reader to understand this exorcism? First, it is clear that this new type of exorcism follows a new type of teaching, and that the two are designed to be interrelated. This notion will become concretized in Mk. 1:27, where the crowd's response to the exorcism is not just amazement, but includes the commentary: "A new teaching—with authority (*exousia*)."⁶⁹ Jesus is characterized as a new kind of miracle worker with a new kind of teaching . . . though the connection between the two is not yet apparent. Second, it is clear that Jesus has inherent authority and power over demons. This power is so great that he does not need to use incantations or amulets, or even to invoke the name of God. Indeed, it is so great that the demon even worries about being "destroyed" (1:24, *apollymi*), which is distinctive as demons are normally bound or sealed (e.g., Tob. 8:3; Jub. 10:7–14; the demons in the Test. Sol.).⁶⁹ In other words, here is yet another disjunction!

68 This notion is common in cross-cultural studies: "... exorcists from varied cultures derive their power not within themselves, but from some godlike power, as 'possessed beings' or 'mediums' " (Strecker, "Jesus and the Demoniacs," 126).

69 Note that the Greek here could indicate "ruin," as if Jesus were simply eliminating or nullifying the demon's power, though this doesn't seem to fit the demon's reaction. An examination of exorcism, in general, reveals a 'casting out' or 'binding' of demons (see text). This is even the case when the final judgment is contemplated (Rev. 20:10, 1 Enoch

Since the reader has encountered so many disjunctions, he may well wonder if he has applied the best initial guesses. Our reader started with the guess of the genre of ancient biography, with Jesus functioning as an “admiring hero” worthy of emulation.⁷⁰ Now our reader might try other guesses, taking into account the options available to him as an ideal reader. He might consider that Jesus functions in the role of a charlatan. Not only does this explain some of the troublesome features, but this motif occurs in surrounding stories (*Bel and the Dragon*). However, this type of story also projects expectations about what ‘should’ happen next: explanations of how the miracles are faked, exposure of the perpetrators, and warnings about false prophets. When these expectations are not met, the reader turns to other possibilities. Next the reader might consider that Jesus is operating as a higher level demon over a lower level one. Not only does this motif exist in the surrounding culture (cf. Jub. 10:8–9), but it is even offered by the text (Mk. 3:22). However, this type creates the expectation that Jesus is demonic in nature, which stands in sharp contrast to earlier textual elements: God calls Jesus “son” and “beloved” (Mk. 1:11), the angels “serve” him (Mk. 1:13), and he proclaims the “good news of God” and the “kingdom of God” (Mk. 1:14–15). Again, this solution creates too many new disjunctions. Next the reader might consider that Jesus functions as a *theios anēr*,⁷¹ or that Mark is a kind of Hellenistic novel that utilizes fantasy,⁷² or that possession represents a form of post-colonial resistance.⁷³ However each of these also creates expectations that are not met—and often flatly contradicted—in the text. In each attempt, the guess is expected to gather more elements into coherent themes, though in the present case, this does not occur.

At this point, our model reader may well conclude that these bits of newness extend beyond the existing religious and literary institutions: *no religious*

10:12–13; 21:10, 55:3–4, 69:28). For counter-examples, cf. Carey Moore, *Tobit*, The Anchor Bible, vol. 40a (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 212–215 (from incantation bowls).

70 On this notion of ‘hero,’ and a classification of hero types, see Hans Robert Jauss, “Levels of Identification of Hero and Audience,” *New Literary History* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 283–317.

71 Cf. Theodore Weeden, *Mark-Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 55. For critique, cf. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, vol. 2, 596–598.

72 For example, J.R. Morgan writes that *Daphnis and Chloe* “is a literary holiday, whose whole point is that the world it depicts does not, and never could exist” (“Daphnis and Chloe,” in *The Greek Novel in Context*, ed. J.R. Morgan and Richard Stoneman [London: Routledge, 1994], 65).

73 So Horsley, “My Name is Legion,” 41–57. For problems with this, cf. Christian Strecker, “Jesus and the Demoniacs,” in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce Malina, and Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 117–133, esp. 122.

or *godly* miracle worker acts in this way. The reader can only wonder where such power came from and how Jesus has the right (*exousia*) to so use it. As with our poetry example from Hass, the reader senses a ‘more-ness’ that extends beyond the language of the text and the institutions of its culture, and so finally turns to biography, manner of living, and commentary materials.

Our model reader begins with commentary materials. Here he might turn to those places where Jesus comments on his own exorcisms. Such are to be found in Mt. 12:27–28 and Lk. 11:19–20, where Jesus states that he works “by the Spirit (finger) of God” as a manifestation of the kingdom of God being “among you.” Twelftree sees this as evidence of his self-understanding, namely that he “was not simply operating unaided but was using a power-authority—the Spirit or the finger of God.”⁷⁴ Now, other exorcists could be evaluated similarly, but, as Nolland notes, Jesus is making the claim that “the presence and power of God are here in some distinctive way . . .”⁷⁵ Thus, despite that fact that Jesus does not pray, offer sacrifices, or invoke God’s name, his commentary on his own exorcisms is that they occur through God’s power. He is a new kind of exorcist, who is “so fully imbibed or filled with the Spirit that he appears to function out of his own personal force.”⁷⁶

Next our model reader might turn to way of living materials, looking at the usual way that Jesus performs exorcisms. Here he finds that Jesus’ exorcisms virtually never fit the typical first-century models. As Meier summarizes:

In the strict cases of demonic possession in the Synoptics . . . Jesus—contrary to common practice in the ancient world—does not actually pray to God, lay on hands, or use elaborate incantations, spells, or religious objects. He does not even cast out demons ‘in the name’ of someone, as opposed to the early Christians . . . All Jesus does is ‘rebuke’ (*epitimaō*), ‘command’ (*epitassō*), and ‘cast out’ (*ekballō*) the demon.⁷⁷

This suggest that the present exorcism is not unique in Jesus’ ministry—as if the author had failed to record a prayer or the use of an amulet in this par-

74 Twelftree, “In the Name of Jesus,” 160; similarly Achtemeier, *Jesus and the Miracle Tradition*, 214–215. Even if this is redactional, it is still Luke’s commentary on the stories in his gospel.

75 John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary 35b (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 641.

76 Twelftree, “In the Name of Jesus,” 160–161.

77 Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, vol. 2, 406; similarly Gundry, *Mark*, 77; and Achtemeier, “Miracles in the New Testament and the Greco-Roman World,” 199–201, 214.

ticular instance, or as if this exorcism were a fluke. Jesus routinely performed exorcisms as if out of some internal or innate power. Indeed, his authority and power are so great that he does not even need to issue a command (Mk. 5:6–14), and the possessed person does not even need to be present (Mk. 7:29–30)!

Finally, the reader might turn to biographical materials, such as Jesus' baptism, where the Spirit descends upon him. This suggests that the Spirit is especially present with him, and so offers a reason for his seeming 'innate' power. Similarly, the reader might turn to Jesus' 'virgin birth' story (Luke 1:26–35). A variety of such stories occur in this general culture, including the virgin births of Plato, Alexander the Great, and Caesar Augustus, as well as the biblical figures of Samuel, Moses, and Isaac (in Philo). In general, these births are attached to the notion of special powers, based on the god's contribution to the person, and so suggest the reason for Jesus' innate power. Origen, writing about the virgin birth of Plato, makes the connection clear:

Ariston (Plato's father) was prevented from having sexual intercourse with her (Plato's mother) until she had given birth to the offspring of Apollo. But these stories are really fables (mythos). People just fabricate such things as this about a man whom they regard as having greater wisdom and power than most others. So they say he received at the beginning of the composition of his body a superior and more divine sperm, as if this were appropriate for those who surpass ordinary human nature.⁷⁸

Let us draw these lines of evidence together. The story itself, given its place in the text and in culture, suggests that Jesus is a different kind of exorcist, who appears to use little in the way of technique (only a command), and no magical objects or appeals to God. This leaves the reader with a variety of questions. To each of these the text suggests a variety of possible answers, which biographical, way of living, and commentary materials help in sorting out:

(1) Is Jesus performing a new kind of exorcism or did this text simply leave out (underreport) the usual features of a religious exorcism? The careful construction of this pericope suggests that the absence of rituals and objects is deliberate. This is given weight by way of living materials, where Jesus' other exorcisms are similarly performed, and where he sends out the disciples "with the authority (*exousia*) to cast out demons" (Mk. 3:15).

⁷⁸ Origen, "Against Celsus 1.37," cited in *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*, 2nd ed., ed. David Cartlidge and David Dungan (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 130.

(2) Is this new type of exorcism religious in nature—is Jesus a ‘godly’ miracle worker—or is he following secular/pagan practices? Despite his failure to pray, invoke God’s name, or offer a sacrifice, he appears to be a religious Jew (in this pericope, he is teaching in the synagogue), and this suggests that he is a godly miracle worker. Such is given added weight by his commentary on these exorcisms (“by the Spirit [finger] of God”), his teaching (on the Kingdom of God), and various biographical events (baptism, transfiguration).

(3) Is this authority and power innate, or is Jesus—in some way—accessing outside powers? Jesus’ refusal to access or use any outside powers (prayer to God, invocation of God’s name, roots, amulets, incantations, etc.) suggests innate authority and power. This is given added weight by way of living materials, where Jesus’ usual exorcisms occur with a simple command, which the demons obey. His excessive authority and overwhelming power is demonstrated in his ability to deal with powerful demons/multiple demons (storm demon, Legion), by the demon’s fear at his presence (the present story, Mk. 5:7), by demons begging to be sent away (Mk. 5:12), and by exorcizing demons that are not even in his presence (Mk. 7:29–30).

(4) How is it that Jesus has innate authority and power over demons? Earlier in the text, the ‘Spirit’ descends upon Jesus (Mk. 1:10), suggesting that the Spirit uniquely empowers him. This is given added weight by Jesus’ commentary on his exorcisms (by the Spirit of God), and by biographical events (his virgin birth).

In all of these, the use of commentary, manner of living, and biography are not used to pose new meanings, but to give support to various possibilities suggested by the text itself. This allows the reader to engage disjunctions created by the author’s newness, and so to more adequately characterize the text’s meaning.

Section 3: Closing Comments on Jesus’ Teaching/Exorcism

Finally, the reader comes to the crowd’s response to Jesus’ exorcism. This contains another occurrence of ‘authority’ (*exousia*): “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him” (1:27). At this point the reader again picks up the problem of relating ‘authority’ to the exorcism. The author has deliberately framed the exorcism with sayings about this ‘authority’ (*inclusio*), suggesting that “teaching with authority” is not simply about teaching in a different style or with new information, but about Jesus’ right—even as a human—to command the demon. The proof of this right is given in the demon’s response: the demon obeys him. As Guelich writes, his authority is “epexegetically clarified by the unclean spirit’s

obedience of Jesus' command (1:26, 27b)."⁷⁹ Jesus has some unique, special, and extra-human right of authority over the demon. This means that the subjective element in this saying is not at the linguistic level (the use of the word has not shifted), but in the symbolic universe to which this word is indexed. Within its cognitive map, this human is ranked 'above' the demon. As Malina and Rohrbaugh conclude, he is "higher in the cosmic hierarchy than demons."⁸⁰ Thus he can act by his own words, and the demon obeys.

However, the demon does not only obey, but makes a series of statements: "Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are . . ." This first part of this revelation (to destroy us) is not a statement about 'rights,' but about 'power.' This means that the recognition scene ("I know who you are") includes the recognition of Jesus' overwhelming power, even including the possibility of this demon's destruction. When Jesus orders the demon out, then, the demon is responding both to Jesus' right to make such a demand and his power to carry that demand out. In this way, Mark has broadened the use of *exousia*.⁸¹

Thus, the disjunction created by affixing *exousia* to an exorcism is best resolved by including two aspects of newness: a shift in the reader's symbolic universe (Jesus' place in the cosmic hierarchy) and a shift in the word's use (broadened it to include 'power'). Both represent a reproduction of the author's subjectivity, where the author has brought something 'new' into existing culture. In experiencing the text—as opposed to assuming that the text is only a reproduction of existing culture—the reader is prodded into creating newness. Such not only helps to make sense of the present use of *exousia*, but can be demonstrated in Mark's continued use of this word. Indeed, attempts at validation for this subjective attachment include not only the usual methods (examining the text for near/far coherence, redundancy), but also 'way of living' materials (Mark's later use of this word).

In conclusion, this pericope presents significant newness for the reader. By detailing our analysis of this example, we have attempted to show *how our model reader recognizes this newness*, though the creation of disjunctions and the recognition of textual resistance. Next we attempted to show *how our*

79 Robert Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, Word Biblical Commentary 34a (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 59.

80 Malina and Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 181.

81 Dillon concludes that, in this text "... *exousia* seems to be closer to *dynamis* than to legitimacy or freedom" (Dillon, "As One Having Authority," 102). However, our sense is that the central notion is still legitimacy and right, due to a shift in the symbolic universe, to which is added issues of power.

model reader resolves such disjunctions, beginning with the ‘further materials’ of the present pericope and cultural context, and then proceeding to specialized processes inherent to the language of the text (Easy Problems), exotic solutions tied to the suspension of conventionalism (Harder Problems), and the uses of biography, way of living, and commentary materials (Hardest Problems). Finally, we have attempted to show *how such solutions are evaluated*, so that some will appear as ‘more likely’ than others. In doing so, we have seen that Jesus functions as a new kind of character (godly miracle worker who is uniquely empowered by the Spirit), who functions within a new narrative syntax (exorcizes demons without prayer, reference to God, incantations, or magical objects), and these count in the reader’s understanding of Jesus’ identity (higher on the cosmic scale than demons).

Conclusion 2.0

In this chapter, we attempted to locate those subjective elements that occur in an author’s use of language, whether implicitly or explicitly encoded. The traditional methods for doing so go under the names of Actual (Strong) Intentionalism, Modest Actual Intentionalism, and Hypothetical Intentionalism.⁸² All utilize the mechanisms of biographical events, way of living materials, and authorial commentary in various combinations. All are also subject to serious critiques, because of their reliance on problematic assumptions.

Instead of utilizing these stances, we have tried to create a more richly textured account of grasping the subjective elements. We start with a model ethical reader, who begins the reading project by taking account of the author-text relation, and so reading with the public language conventions of the intended audience (ideal reader). At this stage, the reader does not utilize these specialized mechanisms of future commentary, way of living materials, or biography—after all, the author did not expect her audience to have these materials, and so did not write with such an audience in mind. She only expected them to have and utilize their public language, as indexed to a particular cultural moment.

82 Of these stances, the one closest to ours is modest actual intentionalism; esp. cf. Noël Carroll, “Art, Intention, and Conversation,” in *Intention & Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 97–131; and Noël Carroll, “Interpretation and Intention: The Debate Between Hypothetical and Actual Intentionalism,” *Metaphilosophy* 31.1/2 (Jan, 2000): 75–95.

However, this changes when disjunctions are created. Now our reader makes guesses about possible solutions, but does so in a way that maintains the assumptions of conventionalism, namely that the author is a competent and skilled user of language, who chose to write from within the standard uses and forms of public language. When these are exhausted, our reader suspends the various assumptions of conventionalism in order to try exotic solutions. When these fail, the reader finally turns to the problematic methods of engaging private materials, such as authorial commentary, way of living materials, and biography. While these can never offer definitive conclusions, they do offer voices to the larger conversation, by adding weight to one or another of the available possibilities. Only when these processes fail does our reader decide that the disjunction is deliberate, and so is ontologically irresolvable (e.g., intended ambiguity).

A Way Forward

In the opening chapter of this book, we laid out a variety of problems and paradoxes. The central issue was that the author writes a narrative with her grasp of public language, while the reader reads a narrative with his grasp of the same. In this way the author reproduces her culture in the text, while the reader reproduces his culture out of the text. This tends to make the author disappear, as the reader applies his use of words, literary structures, and social institutions. The author vanishes behind the veil of each, so that her voice, her ‘meaning,’ is obscured by the fog. We have come a long way since that statement of the problem, and posed ways of bringing the author’s voice back into focus. Indeed, a summary is needed!

But more than just a summary is needed. We need a practice-oriented summary, that is, one which is organized along the task of actually reading texts. In short, we need to move from theoretical considerations about reading, to an application of theory in reading. To accomplish this, we will organize this chapter by laying out our general approach to an ethic of reading. Such will still begin with theory and its concerns, as oriented to the reading process, and end with an examination of other approaches, such as Feminist Criticism and Deconstruction.

Desires, Methods, and Ethics

Our model ethical readers (hereafter, just ‘readers’) pick up a narrative. They do so out of a desire, and that desire will create an inherent bias about what they find. Further, that desire will select a method to create the objects of that desire. Both will bend the text towards pre-reading ends, so that readers are never neutral about reading in the first place. It is like seeing the world through colored glasses, and then trying to identify the actual colors of that world. While readers can change the glasses, from one tint to another, they cannot view the world with no glasses at all. So, the initial goal is to decide which set of glasses to use.

Here readers turn to an inquiry about the issues of desire and method. They might begin by asking if it matters which desire or method they use. To answer this, we examined the author-text relation and the reader-text relation. Writing is an intentional act, where the writer begins with ‘things’ that she desires to

say and 'effects' she desires to create. She proceeds by creating an implied authorA, who formulates the imaginary (characters, story-world) in such a way as to be understandable to her authorial audience (her grasp of the intended audience). She utilizes the linguistic and literary conventions of that audience, and this forms the 'language design' of the text. In doing so, she reproduces the culture of her audience in the text.

But the author, functioning as an implied authorA, also proceeds by reproducing her subjectivity in the narrative. The author is capable of using her subjectivity in the creation of newness, especially when utilizing those specialized processes oriented towards developing newness (hermeneutic circle, supervenience, divergent thinking). To the degree that the author instantiates newness in the text, the text becomes her ever-unique voice in the world. The author's voice may be encoded and transmitted through existing cultural elements (conventional language), but newness can intrude at almost every level, from new uses of words to new forms of language, and even extend to new themes and meanings.

As the text is the author's voice, at least in part, readers recognize that they are dealing with a subject. For our reader, this calls for ethical principles, where the author-as-subject is treated as a subject (a Thou), and not an object (an It). Her voice is valued not because the text is well written or reproduces the reader's favored ideology, but just because the author is a subject. Indeed, her intrinsic value is identical to the reader's own, and this means that the reader affords her voice the same respect that he affords his own. This shapes the contours of the reader-text relation, by placing side restraints on the desires and methods that the reader initially applies to the text. Desires and methods that result in the manipulation or silencing of the author's voice cross into problematic territory. Desires and methods that value the author's voice, and so are designed to recover that voice, fit within these ethical restraints.

Of course, just because a desire or method fits within these restraints does not mean that it accomplishes these ends. Many traditional stances strive to 'create the author's meaning,' such as strong intentionalism and literalism, but are based on problematic assumptions which fail to accomplish that goal. Our suggestion is that the recovery of the author's voice requires an examination of how the author desired, planned, and structured her text to be read. In other words, before the reader actually reads, he turns to the author-text relation, and uses this to guide the reading process. Some might call this 'showing respect' to the text, but more properly, it is showing respect to the author: the reader is attempting to use the text *as the author desired for the reader to use the text*. After all, methods always use the text instrumentally, to reproduce their founding assumptions. Here the 'use' is simply guided by the author-text

relation, with the assumptions that the author is a subject and that writing is an intentional act. Indeed, when the author reads her own text, as a mock reader of her intended audience, this is the way she reads . . . and so she would not consider this type of reading to be a manipulation (at least in principle).

The Author-Text Relation

The reader begins the reading process by taking account of the author-text relation. This relation is characterized by the intentional states and intentional acts that the author used when she wrote and published her narrative. Three of these intentional states/structures are of particular importance.

The first intentional state/structure is that the author writes out of a desire to say something, so that her writing is coherently modeled on this something. Writing is an intentional act, and so has an about-ness to it. From the author's perspective, this about-ness is encoded as a set of designs, and these designs function to reproduce the 'something' that the narrative is about. As these designs converge on this about-ness, the narrative may be characterized as having some degree of coherence.¹ The reader takes account of this intentional structure by reading with the expectation of a thoroughgoing design, even if that design is of an open or a polyphonic text.

This is certainly the case at the lowest levels of language complexity (letters, words, sentences). My reader, in recognizing and taking on the role of an implied reader, assumes that my letters are all from the English alphabet, even though some letters have the same form as Spanish and Greek letters. The creative reader, who disregards the role of the implied reader, could create an entirely different text. But the reader who chooses to assume this role takes account of the author-text relation by reading with an expectation of alphabet-coherence, namely that all my letters are English ones. If the author desires for her reader to switch alphabets half-way through a word, she will need to signal that change.

1 Two notes: (1) By "some degree," we mean to say that complete coherence is never possible, so that the degree of fitted-ness falls under the reader's judgment. At the level of the alphabet, nearly complete coherence occurs; but at the level of themes, the reader's participation and judgment increasingly comes into play. See later under our notion of "satisfaction." (2) The form that coherence takes is located in various cultural institutions. In other words, coherence is an epistemological concept, and not an ontological one. Each institution defines "coherence" for its own use, and this even includes a post-modern reading (e.g., modeled on the abstract—but still coherent—notion of fragmentation).

Now, coherence may be characterized as simple or abstract. 'Simple coherence' occurs when the various elements, at some organizational level, generally fit together at that same level. For example, simple coherence at the level of character description occurs when a character demonstrates the same trait throughout the text: the character manifests 'kindness' in all her actions. On the other hand, abstract coherence occurs when the elements at some organizational level do not fit together at that level, but only at a higher organizational level. At the level of character description, abstract coherence occurs when the traits are oppositional: a character has the traits of 'kindness' and 'unkindness/meanness.' Only at a level above character traits, namely at the level of character-types, do these cohere: 'characters are fragmented' or 'characters are unstable.' As another example, at the level of event-description, simple coherence occurs where multiple characters view an event in the same way. Abstract coherence occurs when where different views are presented—as in the novella *In A Grove*.

In actual reading, the reader usually begins with the assumption of simple coherence at the lower levels of letters, words, and sentences. Indeed, even reading *In A Grove* requires that the reader apply simple coherence to these, as well as to the construction of each perspective! At higher levels of complexity, abstract coherence generally intrudes, and may require considerable creativity on the part of the reader. But then, reading is never a passive process.

The second intentional state/structure is that the author utilizes a design in order to say the 'something' of the text. The author begins with an about-ness, and uses this to generally plan out the text. For a narrative, she does so by creating events, engaging a temporal and/or causal design for those events, placing evaluative comments about the events, creating tone, and the like. In other words, she uses intentional causation to produce the narrative design of the text. She will consider this design to have successfully reproduced her about-ness when she, as a mock-reader of her own text, recreates that about-ness. Should her reading produce unintended objects, she will have to decide how to deal with these (eliminate these, move the narrative towards these new objects, or allow for both in deliberate ambiguity).

Readers take account of this intentional structure by choosing to follow the design of narrative: connecting the events according to its temporal and/or causal structure, following its evaluative comments, and the like. Now, readers could reject and modify the emerging design, usually under the rubrics of 'resisting the text' (e.g., feminism) or 'playing with the text' (e.g., deconstruction). The feminist reader could resist bonding to the central character, out of recognition that such is deforming and damaging to the reader's self. In reading the *Book of Esther*, the reader might not want to assume Esther's point of view, for while she is the protagonist, she also participates in male-centered

values (a beauty contest). This reader might take Vashti's perspective, as this character stands up for herself and refuses to 'sell out.'

These kinds of interpretive moves, at the beginning of reading, create two problematic issues. First, they are often based on a previous reading. When readers resist 'patriarchy in the text,' they are actually saying that they found patriarchal themes in their reading of the text, i.e., in some prior 'fair' reading, where they did not inject their bias but followed the design of the text.² As Rabinowitz has written: "Judith Fetterley's 'resisting reader' can come into being only if there is something to resist."³ This is the reading we're addressing as our initial reading, where the reader follows the designs without resistance. Resistant and playful readings have a place after the initial reading, and here function as voices of critique and creativity in the larger conversation over the text—as we will discuss below.

Second, resistant and playful readings arise from desires that cross the ethical restraints we have posed for the initial reading. These may arise from a desire to rid one's reading of certain ideological manipulation, to find aesthetic pleasure, or to be actively creative. But none of these value the author's voice as a voice, without respect to her ideological stance or aesthetic creativity. When readers value the author's voice because it validates some ideological stance, *they have raised that stance as the determiner of value, and the author only has instrumental value in relation to it.* Instead, our ethic of reading poses that her voice has intrinsic value, and this is prior to her selection of topics, use of ideological stances, or application of writing style.

Our point, then, is not that these desires or methods are 'wrong'—indeed, we think quite the opposite—but only that they are misplaced. The author-as-subject is a Thou, and deserves to have her voice prior to the reader's critique and playfulness. Readers might still have concerns over adopting a damaging role in a narrative, as with our example of Esther, and so we will spend considerable time on this issue below (under "Second Readings: Central Issues").

The third intentional state/structure is that the author desires for her narrative to be understandable. When the author engages in publishing behavior, she shows the desire to be understandable by a particular audience. As an intentional act, she (implicitly) envisions the language of her intended audience,

2 The reader may have engaged in a partial reading, say of the first dozen paragraphs, and herein found "patriarchy." While this recognition is appropriate, using it to characterize the remainder of the text is not: the author may be setting up the problem of patriarchy only to attack it or show its damaging effects later in the text. Cf. Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, where the protagonist comes to believe the opposite of his opening position.

3 Peter Rabinowitz, *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1987), 86.

and projects forward an implied authorA who applies this language design. When she reads her own text, she does so as a mock reader from her authorial audience, and utilizes those conventions. If this reading reproduces her aboutness, the author generally assumes that her narrative is understandable to her intended audience (meets her 'conditions of satisfaction'). So the structure of 'understandable' is tied to those language conventions, as located in the culture of her intended audience (social institutions, symbolic universe, cognitive maps, etc.).

Readers take account of this design by creating an ideal reader who begins reading with the language of the intended audience. However, language is not a free-floating system (*langue*), as if unattached to the life-world (Chapter 5). Language is indexed to a particular cultural moment, and only by grasping the elements of that moment can language be individuated for the text at hand. As such, this process begins with identification of the intended audience, and ends with the construction of an ideal reader, who accepts those cultural elements as valid during its time in the story world.

Now the reader is not 'required' to assume the conventions of any particular language or culture. He can read with any set of language conventions and creatively deal with any disjunctions so created. Normally, this is done by adopting the notion of textual autonomy, so that the text is unattached to any particular culture, author, or implied authorA (e.g., radical forms of Reader-Response Criticism, Deconstruction, Neopragmatism). But this brings us back to our ethic of reading: the author encoded her voice by using an implied authorA, who utilized the language and culture of the intended audience as she understood it (the authorial audience). She expected the reader to reconstruct her voice by using those same conventions. When the reader locates her words differently, he risks manipulating, silencing, and marginalizing the author's voice.

These three intentional states/structures form the contours of the author-text relation. From these, readers generate their principles of reading. They approach the text with an expectation of coherence, with a desire to follow the designs in the text, and with the social institutions of the intended audience. These do not yet deal with any actual reading of any actual text, but rather are the principles that contour the reader-text relation for an initial reading of the text.

Before Reading: Identifying the Intended Audience

Our discussion, to this point, suggests that a central pre-reading activity is to identify and characterize the intended audience. A full explication of these two processes would require a book-length treatment for each of the biblical texts

involved, so here we can only offer a general and idealized scheme. A number of paths may be followed in identifying the intended audience, though we suggest one that begins with the text itself. The opening words of the text provide general information about the intended audience. Is the alphabet English or Greek? Are the social institutions from another period (healing illness with exorcisms, mud, and spittle), or from the reader's period (use of medicines and surgery)? This initial glance produces an initial guess, which is general in nature. Levinson uses this kind of identification in his reading of *The Brothers Karamazov*:

Dostoyevsky's intended audience . . . would be something on this order: competent readers of Russian, practiced in narrative fiction, aware of Russian history, familiar with Russian religious traditions, and so on.⁴

He is also clear about his method:

I consulted no oracle for it, neither did I study Dostoyevsky's diaries or the records left by his physician. I merely considered the novel itself, the demands of comprehension inherent in it, and the novel's context of creation (e.g., nineteenth-century Russia).⁵

Beneath this lies the claim that language usage is indexed to a culture, so that the two exist in an ever unique relationship at any point in time. Because of this connection, it is theoretical possible to use the language itself to identify—at least in general—the cultural moment. It can be read off of the text. So, for the New Testament, readers might note the relative absence of the optative case, thus suggesting an audience that spoke *Koinē* Greek instead of Classical Greek (at least for the final editor).⁶ The gospels utilize economic institutions that point to a country occupied by Rome (e.g. Lk. 20:22–25). The presence of apocalyptic literature suggests a social situation of perceived distress and social upheaval.⁷

The reader skilled in linguistics can be even more specific about the intended audience, by identifying the dialect used in the text. The reader

4 Jerrold Levinson, "Intention and Interpretation: A Last Look," in *Intention and Interpretation*, ed. Gary Iseminger (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 227–228.

5 Ibid.

6 Any advanced grammar will rehearse the shifts in Greek across its periods.

7 John Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 38.

skilled in sociology, sociolinguistics, and cultural studies can do the same with the various beliefs and institutions suggested by the text. The reader skilled in historical studies can identify specific events addressed in the text, while the reader skilled in cultural anthropology can recognize cultural models that are situated in certain types of cultures. So, for example, Horsley uses a cross-cultural anthropological model to suggest that demonic possession usually arises in situations of “imperial conquest and domination.”⁸

To this can be added the internal and external dating criteria that are so well known to biblical scholars. A few examples, using internal criteria, will suffice. Jn. 21:22–23 and I Cor. 15:6 suggest that only a few people who had seen Jesus were still alive, so that these texts may be dated towards the end of the first generation of early Christians. The apocalyptic-like section of Mark suggest that this gospel was written during the time of the Jewish War, for “the severe political-religious conflict portrayed by Mark as a whole closely matches the structural social conflict in Roman Palestine known through external sources such as Josephus.”⁹ However, Mark was probable written before the destruction of the temple, as the description (Mk. 13:2) misses important actions (e.g., the fire) and does not match the actual events (parts of the walls were left standing).¹⁰

Finally, the reader may turn to authorial materials ‘about’ the author’s selection of an intended audience. This include memoirs, speeches, and introductions, where the author herself addresses the cultural moment, either directly (e.g., dates from a memoir, comments on her audience) or indirectly (e.g., connections to some historical event). While such materials are rare in biblical literature, they are mentioned here for completeness. At this stage, such materials *are used solely to identify the intended audience*—they are not used to grasp the author’s meaning or any insights into the purposes of the text.

While the intended audience can never be identified with precision, and may even be multiple (several speech communities), *these materials do place limitations on the possibilities and allow for a general characterization of the cultural moment*. When a 1st century Jewish author wrote about a ‘windstorm,’ she could not have imagined ‘wind’ as due to a low pressure system or cold

8 Richard Horsley, “My Name is Legion,” In *Experientia*, vol. 1, ed. Frances Flannery, Collene Shantz, and Rodney Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 51.

9 Richard Horsley, “Wisdom and Apocalypticism in Mark,” in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie*. ed. Leo Perdue, Bernard Scott, and William Wiseman (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 237–238.

10 Cf. Craig Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, Word Biblical Commentary, 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 298–299.

front. Her symbolic universe did not grasp ‘winds’ as caused by physical forces or natural laws. Winds were caused by spiritual beings, and altering the wind meant influencing one of these.

However, central problems related to ‘specificity’ still remain. Let us briefly address two. First, the diversity of beliefs within the general culture, can pose a problem in identifying which ‘belief’ to apply. For example, 1st century Palestinian audiences generally considered winds to be caused by spiritual powers, but one concurrent group considered winds to be caused by physical processes (Epicureans). When the reader is not sure which perspective best represents the intended audience, he turns back to the text, as this is where the author concretizes her intentional acts. Each cultural perspective will generate a different set of expectations for textual elements, which are appropriate to that perspective. So, the text of the *Storm at Sea* (Mark 4:35–41) has the following elements: Jesus rebukes the wind, talks to the wind, orders the wind to “be silent” and “be muzzled,” and the wind obeys him. This narrative’s elements are best accounted for by the symbolic universe of spiritual causation, and not physical causation.

In practice, the reader applies an initial guess to the text, and thereby creates textual elements and connections. As the text’s elements and connections were designed for a particular cultural moment, the application of a different one will generally produce a series of disjunctions (see our example of the *Demon Possessed Boy* in Chapter 4). As we earlier concluded, this type of disjunction occurs *where the reader’s application of an initial guess constructs textual elements that fail to fit into the design and expectations suggested by that initial guess*. This serves as a means of evaluating the initial guess.

The second problem is that of circularity. Readers use the text to recognize cultural elements, assume that they do this from some objective position, and then use these to control their reading of the text. However, their recognition of cultural elements remains biased by their existing cultural constructs—indeed, their recognition is contextualized by it. This is less the case with their culture’s social institutions, which are more easily recognized, and more the case with its symbolic universe and cognitive maps, which function at the level of preconscious controls. For example, when readers come to the story of Jesus putting saliva on the tongue of a man with a speech impediment (Mk. 7:33), they easily recognize that a different social institution of healing is being utilized. However, they may fail to recognize the shift in symbolic universe, on the meaning of saliva, and so impose a physical theory of causation where a magical theory is in view.¹¹

11 Peter Bolt writes: “These actions are not merely symbols of Jesus’ mercy and power, or part of a medical healing ritual, but suggest a magical framework” (*Jesus’ Defeat of*

Thus, the reader's recognition of a cultural element represents an interaction between textual cues and the reader's cultural framework, and so can only be provisional in nature. On collecting an initial set of these elements—using the mechanisms discussed above—the reader makes an initial guess as to the cultural moment which the text appears to employ. In doing so, the reader can neither be overly specific, as if his guess could identify an exact moment, nor overly general, as if his guess only represented humanity in general. Peterson addresses the former problem, by examining the various authors who have proposed more specific audiences, and how each specific audience produces a different reading of the text. Peterson concludes:

The scholars whose work this book has reviewed all place a great deal of weight on the appropriate construction of the Markan community; and each produces a different one. Every time, these communities go along with interpretations of Mark's text that are in tension with the reading which other Markan community constructors produce.¹²

On the other hand, too general of an audience fails to individuate elements for the text at hand, i.e., it fails to account for the necessary emotions, connotations, and connections. A general audience-construct with the belief that 'illness is due to non-specified agents' is insufficient to ground the fear, revulsion, and impurity of 'demon caused sickness.' In an attempt to mediate between these, Bolt suggests the following:

If all we can say about Mark's provenance is that 'the [G]ospel was composed somewhere in the Roman Empire', it makes good sense to conceive of its early readers in correspondingly general terms, i.e., as those who lived in the Graeco-Roman world of the latter part of the first century.¹³

While Bolt's "early readers" are constructed a bit on the broad side, he is able to use even this to produce an analysis of 'demon caused illness' that is similar to the one posed here.

Death, Society for New Testament Studies 125 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], 206).

12 Dwight Peterson, *The Origins of Mark: The Markan Community in Current Debate* (Brill Academic: Leiden; 2000), 12.

13 Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 8. For an analysis of Mark's audience based on the rhetoric, see David Rhoads, Joana Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 143–146.

Finally, it is important to return to the issue of multiple authors, editors, and performances, and how this affects the cultural location of the text. As noted earlier (Chapter 2), biblical texts often are the end product of such collectives. Performers and editors work within the text, participating in the events of the text even as they are modifying them, so that the processes of participation and modification are entangled. This opens the possibility of multiple implied authorAs, so that the reader may recognize multiple ideal readers, each utilizing a different cultural moment.

However, in oral performances, as with editors, the final performance is characterized by that performer's intentional objects, in her attempt to render the text organic. So Zumthor suggests that what exists in the memory of the performer is "not a totality, but a totalizing intention," and that each performance "instigates a new integrity."¹⁴ While this integrity may be imposed by the final performer, traces of earlier performance necessarily bleed through—not the least because the present performer is re-performing someone else's performance. Performers are not passively repeating what they received, but are entangled in the event of the performance, so that they actively participate in the creation of old meaning (a genuine re-presentation of the performance they saw) and new meaning (interacting with the present audience, responding to issues in the present context, subjectively experiencing the events of the text, etc.).

In the end, many editors are sufficiently skilled so as to create the illusion of an organic text, through the erasure of contradictory, prior voices. However, with less careful editors, prior voices may penetrate the final edition. This opens the theoretical possibility for identifying multiple implied readers, multiple ideal readers, and multiple implied authorRs.¹⁵ Such is especially the case in texts such as multiple Isaiahhs, the documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch, and the endings of Mark—though with a cautionary word about final editors and their intentional objects.

But for most biblical texts, or at least the more unified 'chunks,' our reader does not begin reading with the desire to identify multiple editors, and so apply techniques designed to locate multiple implied readers. Rather, our reader

14 Paul Zumthor, *Oral Poetry: An Introduction*, trans. Kathy Murphy-Judy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 180–181.

15 On multiple implied readers, cf. Brian Richardson, who concludes: "I believe that the presence of multiple implied readers in a single text is a fairly rare phenomenon and should not be confused with other, more familiar kinds of ambiguous, polysemous, or multivocal texts" ("Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers," *Style* 41, no. 3 [Fall 2007]: 267, accessed May 13, 2014, Academic Search Complete EBSCOhost).

begins with the desire to hear the voice of the final author—her intentional objects. The case is similar when multiple editions of a text, such as a novel, have been issued: *the reader does not open the latest edition with the desire to find the intentional objects of the earlier edition, but the meaning of the present author*. Here we agree with the general conclusion of Richardson:

Published narratives are intentional acts, and it is a helpful interpretive practice to assume that a narrative is purposive, as if from a single sensibility: if one doesn't notice a reason for a segment of a text, it is beneficial to assume that an overarching purpose exists and that the reader or critic would do well to continue to seek the justification of its presence.¹⁶

As a second reading (see notion of a 'staged reading strategy' below), readers might well attempt to identify and locate the intentional objects of an earlier editor or submerged voices.

Before Reading: Characterizing the Intended Audience

Once the intended audience is identified to the reader's satisfaction—and this is always a matter of judgment—he then turns to characterize that audience. Most readers do not have sufficient expertise to do primary research in all the relevant areas (history, sociology, cultural anthropology, literary studies, and semantics), but scholars have brought the relevant materials together in reference works. So the reader of the Gospels might examine literature concurrent with the text in question (e.g., *The New Testament Background*, C.K. Barrett), descriptions of the social institutions of that period (e.g., *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, Everett Ferguson), and applications of appropriate cultural models (*The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, Bruce Malina). In none of this are we suggesting that readers take on the author's consciousness or subjective state, but that they construct the cultural moment to which the author wrote, that is, of the intended audience already identified.

In these studies, the goal is to create a general picture of the culture of the intended audience, while also recognizing that there are many groups within this larger culture, just as there are multiple speech communities. Group membership is relatively uniform, and so serves as a useful heuristic device: "Group

16 Brian Richardson, "Introduction. The Implied Author: Back from the Grave, or Simply Dead Again," *Style* 45, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 8.

designation . . . simplifies a complex situation for analytic purposes . . .”¹⁷ Each group has a relatively common symbolic universe and cognitive maps, which give value and meaning to objects, actions, and practices.¹⁸ Such values are mediated through social institutions, such as “family, government, economics, education, and religion.”¹⁹ Indeed, social institutions encode relatively stable intersections within this background. For example, the social institution of religion encodes the intersection of sacred time with sacred space, and prescribes practices appropriate to that intersection.

One of the easiest cognitive maps to identify in 1st century Judaism is that of ‘space.’ Generally speaking, space is mapped along a hierarchical axis, extending from the ‘common space’ of the gentile world to the ‘sacred space’ of the temple. The Mishnah provides a nice outline:

The land of Israel is holier than all lands . . . Within the wall (of Jerusalem) is more holy than they . . . The temple mount is more holy than it . . . The court of women is more holy than it . . . The court of the priests is more holy than it . . . The sanctuary is more holy than it . . . The Holy of Holies is more holy than they. (m. Kelim 1:6–9).

In a similar way, times and actions are mapped out along an axis from common to sacred. The sacred, as Malina writes, “includes persons, places, things, and times that are symbolized or filled with some sort of set-apartness that we and others recognize.” Such maps not only allow for the location of various practices along this common-sacred axis, so as to assign meaning and value to each practice, but also dictate where transgressions occur.

Consider the intersection between space and action. Only sacred actions are appropriate to sacred space. This explains why it was acceptable to ‘teach’ and ‘read Torah’ in the temple, but not acceptable—from Jesus’ perspective—to have ‘buying and selling’ in the temple, or even ‘carrying things’ through the temple (Mk. 11:15–16). Jesus’ reaction, “My house shall be called a house of

17 Richard Rohrbaugh, “‘Social Location of Thought’ as a Heuristic Construct in New Testament Study,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 30 (1987): 108; accessed March 12, 2014, ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBSCOhost.

18 On cognitive maps and symbolic universe, esp. cf. Jerome Neyrey, “Miracles In Other Words: Social Science Perspectives on Healing,” in *Miracles in Jewish and Christian Antiquity*, ed. John Cavadini (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999); and Jerome Neyrey, “Clean/Unclean, Pure/Polluted, and Holy/Profane: The Idea and the System of Purity,” in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996).

19 Malina, *The New Testament World*, 19–20

prayer” is simply another way of stating that profane actions are out of place in sacred space.

Or consider the intersection between time and action. Only sacred actions are appropriate to sacred time. This explains why it was acceptable to do the work of sacrifice on the Sabbath (Numb. 28:9), but not acceptable to heal (Mt. 12:10) or gather grain (Lk. 6:2). Indeed, ‘reaping’ is one of the 39 categories of work that was forbidden on the Sabbath (m. Shabbat 7:2), and healing was severely restricted (cf. m. Shabbat 22:6), though allowed if “it is a matter of doubt as to danger of life” (m. Yoma 8:6). In creating such restrictions, the religious institution wasn’t oriented by legalism as an end, but by showing respect for sacred time: *profane actions were out of place and risked contaminating the participants, the community, and even the land*. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the leaders attempted to stop such contamination through reasoned argument, and finally persecution.²⁰

The point to be made is that creating a ‘picture of culture’ is not restricted to something as simple as social description. Such might be compared to looking up a word in a dictionary. The reader needs a richer grasp of each cultural element, by moving from a description of the way things ‘are’ (Sabbath law), to where they came from (development of Sabbath law), how they are integrated into the culture (religious social institution), what they mean (connections to the symbolic universe, placement in cognitive maps), and how they mean (models of ‘sacred’ and ‘common’). Only this gets the reader to the visceral responses that occur in a transgression or dispute: “And everyone who pollutes it (the Sabbath) let him surely die. And anyone who will do work therein, let him surely die forever . . .” (Jub. 2:27–28).²¹

Finally, we must add one more issue from the recognition that our texts arose in oral cultures: participants in oral cultures expect different types of intentional objects than participants in literate cultures. Farrell notes that biblical texts “manifest the psychodynamics of primary orality,” which is “imagistic . . . action-oriented . . . concrete.”²² Such is generally oriented about the existential concerns of actual living, and less so about abstract theoretical considerations. So Farrell notes that in oral cultures, the Genesis creation narratives would not have been grasped as scientific explanations, but as “metaphoric expressions of man’s dependence on God . . . of man’s need to strive

20 Cf. Malina on the “five ways of facing up to anomalies” (*The New Testament World*, 167–168).

21 O.S. Wintermute, transl., *Jubilees*, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ed. James Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1985), 58.

22 Thomas Farrell, “Kebler’s Breakthrough,” *Semeia* 39 (1987): 28–29.

in the present, even in the midst of the terrors of history, to draw closer to God.”²³ Similarly, oral cultures are less interested in historical occurrences in the abstract, and more in how these created lessons for present living. So Aune writes that Hellenistic historians “regarded the past as normative for present conduct, i.e., it provided moral guidance for the present and future.”²⁴ These kinds of consideration go into the reader’s construction of the ideal reader of these texts.

Once this picture of the intended audience is constructed, the reader assumes this role, and so becomes an ideal reader—for his time in the story-world. He temporarily takes on (believes, accepts, grasps as true) their symbolic universe, cognitive maps, social institutions, and social practices. While the modern reader knows that winds are caused by physical forces, he actively constructs an ideal reader who believes that winds are caused by God (e.g., Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers 12:33–34), angels (e.g., 11 Enoch 40:9–11), and demons (e.g., Test. Sol. 22:2–4).

When reading the Storm at Sea (Mk. 4:35–41), this ideal reader recognizes that a demonically caused wind is called for (note the words *siōpaō*, *phimoō*, and *epitimaō*, which would not be spoken to God or God’s angels).²⁵ This calls for an implied reader who recognizes the reality of a demonic windstorm, and so experiences the fear of death. A similar notion was posed by Coleridge, in his “willing suspension of disbelief,” where Coleridge asks his modern readers to temporarily believe in “persons and characters supernatural . . . these shadows of imagination.”²⁶ This attending sense, of the story-world as the reading-self’s reality, is rooted in our discussion of the textual world as a type of actual world (Chapter 5).

In an interesting twist, the author could plan for her narrative to be read *with cultural beliefs that are opposed to those of her intended audience*. The genre of fantasy presents itself here, where the modern author expects her audience to utilize ‘magical causation,’ even though she knows that they do not have this belief. When an author wants her readers to abandon the beliefs of her intended audience, she will have to make it clear in her narrative, and create structures to support the necessary interconnections. In a similar way, the first-

23 Ibid., 33.

24 David Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987), 62; cf. 36, 64. Note that Aune is not specifically addressing orality here.

25 Mark puts two of these same words, *phimoō* and *epitimaō*, in Jesus’ address to the unclean spirit in an earlier pericope (1:25).

26 Samuel Coleridge, “Biographia Literaria,” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 677.

century author could have used her subjectivity to create a world where the winds are controlled by physical forces, but, again, she would have to make this clear to her readers who 'know' otherwise.

Finally, the question arises as to whether the reader's wholesale assumption of the beliefs, social institutions, and symbolic universe of the intended audience might be damaging to the reader. We began this discussion above, where we addressed the possibility of deforming the self by bonding to a character (e.g., Esther). The common thread is that both enjoin the reader to 'take on' or 'assume' something that is alien, and this risks changing the actual-self. We will turn to this serious issue below (under "Second Readings: Central Issues").

The Initial Reading

Having done this preliminary work, the reader is now ready to actually read. Reading is a remarkably complicated process, where the reader combines marks on the page to produce a story-world, populates that world with imaginary characters, fills in the gaps of that world, enters and experiences events in that world, creates meaning bits from each event, combines these bits into themes, puzzles out the relations of these themes, and emerges with historical meanings. Here it is critical to remember that these are historical meanings: the author's voice is directed towards her intended audience, and 'her meaning' only comes to presence 'in' that culture. Transferring her voice to a different culture requires a formal step of interpretation. Had the authors of *Luke* or *Beowulf* lived in the post-Enlightenment age, it is likely that they would have instantiated their 'meanings' in a very different type of story-world. However, these processes are beyond the scope of this text. Our summary, here, can only focus on the reader's approach to the very historical reconstitution of the author's voice.

When readers take account of the author-text relation, they choose to read the text in the way that the author designed for her text to be read. This means creating an ideal reader who uses the language of the intended audience and locates that language in their social institutions. It also means applying that language in a wholly conventional way, as if the author wrote without engaging her subjectivity. This is the stance of conventionalism, which assumes that the application of public language conventions adequately conveys the author's meaning. Indeed, since the author desires to be understandable to her intended audience, it is expected that she will use their language in a conventional way. For her to create new forms, or to use old forms in new ways, is to risk misunderstanding.

Nevertheless, authors generally take that risk. Perhaps the author feels that the best way to create some emotional effect is through a newly created metaphor. Perhaps her use of the hermeneutic circle, divergent thinking, or supervenience has suggested new ends altogether . . . even ends that do not exist in culture. Perhaps her grasp of language has subjective additions of which she is unaware. Perhaps she wants to startle the reader into seeing a common object in a wholly different way (defamiliarization). All of these amount to subjective intrusions into an otherwise seemingly conventional pattern of language, and for the reader, they create disjunctions.

It is important to remember that we are addressing intra-cultural disjunctions here, and not cross-cultural ones. Cross-cultural disjunctions are the result of *the implied reader not resembling the authorial audience*, as this is where communication occurs. Such are resolved by adopting the cultural competencies of the intended audience. But intra-cultural disjunctions occur when *the implied reader does resemble the authorial audience*—when both are grounded in the same intended audience, so that both would recognize the same disjunction. These disjunctions arise when the author's subjectivity creates objects that do not exist in the intended audience's culture, but cross their cultural horizons into the realm of the other, the exotic, and the new.

When readers encounter newness, they experience a disjunction in language. Such disjunctions generally represent a mismatch between what readers expect to occur in language, and what actually occurs. While minor mismatches are relatively common, and are just as commonly ignored, some may be of sufficient magnitude as to cause readers to stop and evaluate.

Initially our model readers assume that such a disjunction represents an epistemological problem, and attempt to reduce it to understanding. Their opening move is to maintain the assumptions of conventionalism, and turn to resources already existent in language. So they might begin by considering common figures of speech and unusual uses of words, and then engage uncommon figures and archaic uses. Our example was of a malapropism, where a word appears to be misused, but on examination, nicely fits into a standard—if unusual—figure of speech. Such can then be validated by using resources internal to language (redundancy, hermeneutic circle) and the community (intersubjective agreement). Most disjunctions are resolved in a 'satisfactory way' at this level. After all, the author designed her text to be understandable.

However, there is a risk here. Readers, and especially readers from a different culture, tend to assume that these bits *must fit into the intended audience's culture*, as described by an application of relevant methods (historical, sociological, anthropological, literary, etc.). The assumption is that these bits, in some way, are constituted by the 'sameness' of that culture, and so readers

tend to force them into the categories and models described by that method. The creative reader can force any non-fitting bit into some social institution, but in doing so, the reader misses any genuine newness or authorial subjectivity. Fortunately, there is a way to evaluate these guesses. Any institution applied to the text will create certain expectations, concerning what 'should' happen next and how that event 'should' occur. If the guess is that Jesus' exorcism is the work of a charlatan, then the literary expectation is that he will be exposed as a fraud who exploits the fears of others for profit. When the text fails to meet these expectations, the reader recognizes the need to reevaluate.

The central issue, here, is the quality of 'fitted-ness,' that is, how well the proposed solution fits the problematic element into the text. Does it match up with the expectations generated by the immediate context? Is it suggested by the redundant elements of its immediate context? Does it bring a sense of greater coherence to the themes and plot? Does it clash with the connections internal to the text? Put in this way, it is clear that fitted-ness is bound to issues of redundancy and coherence within the text. Earlier we classified these as elements of near coherence and far coherence, under the notion of a thoroughgoing design.

However, it is also clear that fitted-ness is always indeterminate, as the notions of redundancy and coherence necessarily give rise to issues of circularity, and so to the problems of recession and deferral.²⁷ Ambiguity and vagueness can never be fully resolved, but readers may reach a point of sufficient resolution for their judgment and taste. This 'remainder' or 'surplus' does not mean that readers give up on the ethical project, but only that they have a bit of humility about their conclusions, and so continue to actively and creatively work with the text—a very worthwhile project.

When disjunctions cannot be resolved under the assumptions of conventionalism, the reader assumes that the author has engaged in the creation of newness. As the author has stepped outside the boundaries of conventional language, so must the reader. She may have applied a subjective attachment to some word (idiosyncratic use) or created a new word altogether (neologism). The common thread is that all breach one of the assumptions of conventionalism. To reduce these to understanding, the reader must also suspend these assumptions, and turn to more exotic solutions. Various solutions are

27 On circularity: the whole is used to posit the general meaning of the subjective element, and then that subjective meaning is validated by its ability to fit into the (already posited) whole. On recession/deferral: the redundancy of the surrounding words is used to posit the general meaning of the subjective element, but then that subjective element is used to further texture the surrounding words.

suggested by accessing resources within language, such as the mechanisms of redundancy and the hermeneutical circle, *so that the resolution process does not occur in isolation from the text*. Such solutions do not wholly reduce the disjunction, as they are indirect means of getting at subjective elements, but they do place side restraints on the field of possibilities, and so may produce 'satisfactory' results in the reader's judgment.

However, a few of these disjunctions may still remain unresolved in the reader's judgment. At this point the reader has no further options in public language, as these bits lack sufficient interconnections for further reduction. These can only be understood by turning to private authorial materials, beginning with authorial commentary (memoirs, speeches, introductions), followed by way of living materials, and last of all, biographical events. As these materials are tied to shaky assumptions, their use is limited to the weighing of possibilities that are allowed under conventionalism. Only when these fail does the reader conclude that the author designed her text to be vague or ambiguous, and so to enjoy this play as an element of the author's voice.

Second Readings: Central Issues

To this point, our readers have been guided by an ethic that values the author as a subject, and so results in a particular kind of initial reading. But this is not the only reading of that text. While our model readers initially desire to hear the author's voice, they may also choose—and in our judgment, should choose—to create a larger conversation over the text. When they participate in this conversation, they bring their own voices and critiques to the table. They may even bring voices and critiques from other perspectives. These are engaged because each reader has a variety of other interests and desires.

This brings us to an important point, namely that readers approach a text with a variety of interests and desires. Our ethic of reading may have placed side restraints on the initial reading, but these are only for the initial reading. Once the author has been allowed her say, our model readers should engage the narrative from a wide range of human interests, desires, locations, methods, and critiques. These all come together at the 'grand table of interpretation,' which is constituted as a larger discussion where many voices, representing many interests, come together for purposeful work. But before turning to those specific interests, we might ask why the larger discussion is important in the first place.

A monologic reading, where a single perspective is used to determine meaning, creates two interrelated problems. On the one hand, reading from a single

perspective *risks distorting the author's voice*, while on the other, it *may fail to protect the reader from the author's voice*. We addressed the first of these in Chapter 5 ("The Problem of Monological Truth"), where we found that language treats the reader as an object, in that it foists an ideological residue upon the reader. When this reader attempts to construct the social institutions of the intended audience, his efforts are already contaminated by that residue. One way to address this is by examining how well the reader's social institutions fit with the actual elements constructed from the text—as examined earlier. But the other way is to abandon a monologic reading, and bring other perspectives into the conversation. As each perspective is based on different assumptions, the broader dialogue may lead to the recognition of one's ideological residues. In other words, one cure to unrecognized bias is expansive conversation. Habermas addresses this as "the self-reflection of all parties involved—a self-reflection which is found in and carried out through dialogue."²⁸ In short, the larger dialogue provides a powerful tool in the identification of unrecognized distortion—even though it is never fully eliminated.

The second problem is that a single perspective may fail to protect the reader from the author's voice, language, and words, with their "dark histories which reach beyond the aesthetic structure of the work of art."²⁹ When our readers take account of the author-text relation, they begin reading without resistance to the design of the text or the cultural institutions of the intended audience. As noted earlier, these may be deforming to the reader. To this issue we now turn.

There is little question that a text—and especially a narrative—forces the reader into a counterfactual situation, where the reader (reading-self) assumes an 'as if' kind of existence during his time in the story-world. This world projects a particular form of philosophy, ethics, economics, politics, and gender as if they were 'natural' or 'right' for that story-world. Indeed, each is validated by the events of that story-world. Even a postmodern narrative, which presents multiple non-coherent systems, does so as a re-presentation of postmodern philosophy, as if that were the natural way or the deep reality of the world. Even when the author is unaware that she is reproducing her symbolic universe, cognitive maps, and social institutions, this nevertheless occurs. After all, authors are not neutral, and implied authors are projections, though not

28 Jürgen Habermas, "On Hermeneutics' Claim to Universality," in *The Hermeneutics Reader*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 1985), 317.

29 Duncan Salkeld, "New Historicism," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 60.

necessarily sincere ones, of these 'non-neutral' actual authors. If the author's culture is racist, ethnocentric, or misogynist, then the reader can expect to see these... unless the author has engaged her subjectivity to visualize a brave new world. In short, narratives are always hegemonic, and the events within the narrative generally validate that hegemony.

Now, if narratives only developed non-serious meaning, this might not be a problem. But, as we examined in Chapter 5, this is not the case. Readers grant the story-world the ontological status of a temporary actual world, so that narratives create serious meaning. Thus, experiencing the roles and institutions of that world risk reshaping the reader. Ricoeur addresses this, by noting that each reader enters a world that has been configured for a particular reality, with the goal of refiguring that reader's understanding. He concludes: "The reader rather is enlarged in his capacity of self-projection by receiving a new mode of being from the text itself."³⁰ Davis eloquently notes the end results:

My very sense of myself comes out of the pages of novels as much as it comes out of the working-class apartment in the Bronx where I attained consciousness... My notions of beauty, truth, and reality peel off the pages of these works. I am the perfect prisoner of the novel.³¹

To address this thorny issue, we need to return to the distinction between the 'reading-self' and the 'actual-self' (Chapter 5). The reading-self is a projection of the actual-self, which is designed to enter and experience the possible world of the text. But the actual-self sits outside of the story-world, never for one moment believing that the story-world is anything but a story-world. Thus, when Romeo and Juliette die in the story-world, the reading-self may weep, but the actual-self does not call for an ambulance. Gibson summarizes this twin-reader notion nicely:

30 Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 94. Anthony Thiselton summarizes: "Ricoeur insists that fiction has the power 'to re-make' reality, by ordering otherwise scattered aspects of the world into new configurations" (*New Horizons in Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992], 357).

31 Lennard Davis, *Resisting Novels* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 1–2. Especially see his descriptions of adolescent reading (*ibid.*, 9–10). Ethical criticism picks up this same theme, addressing how narratives "make and remake" ourselves (Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 227; cf. 151–153, 252). Folk Psychology suggests that such simulations "have a tendency to go on-line" (Robert Gordon, "Sympathy, Simulation, and the Impartial Spectator," *Ethics* 105, no. 4 [July 1995]: 739).

(T)here are two readers distinguishable in every literary experience. First, there is the 'real' individual upon whose crossed knee rests the open volume . . . Second, there is the fictitious reader—I shall call him the 'mock reader'—whose mask and costume the individual takes on in order to experience the language.³²

The reading-self enters the story-world, and 'lives in' the various social institutions and symbolic universe of that story-world. The reading-self experiences the events of the narrative as actual experiences, and the dialogue as genuine speech acts, so that its meaning is grasped as 'serious meaning.' However, the actual-self never enters that world.

In special situations, these twin selves can even be glimpsed. One such situation occurs when deciding to perform a resistant reading. Here the actual-self—who evaluates the story-world from the outside—recognizes that the reading-self is participating in an androcentric worldview, and so consciously alters the participation of the reading-self. A similar recognition occurs when encountering a disjunction in the text: our attention slips from the reading-self, who is experiencing confusion in the story-world, to the actual-self, who is using reason to figure out what went wrong.

Given this distinction, the question changes to: how do the experiences of the reading-self come to affect the actual-self. There is little doubt that the reading-self shifts across the experiences of the story-world, so that it becomes 'other' with respect to the actual-self. One group of authors have noted that "during the experience of reading, the reader will become other and more than what he or she was."³³ The reading-self, who begins as an accurate projection of the actual-self, is serially changed across the pages of the narrative, accepting processes, beliefs, and biases that are not part of the actual-self's world. Indeed, the reading-self becomes 'other' with respect to the actual self. So Booth quips that, in reading, we "become a 'mock reader' whom we cannot respect."³⁴

32 Walker Gibson, "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," in *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane Tompkins (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 2. Wolfgang Iser also offers a dual-self reading system: "... the suggestion that there are two selves is certainly tenable, for these are the role offered by the text and the real reader's own disposition..." (*The Act of Reading* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978], 37).

33 Jeff Mitscherling, Tanya Ditommaso, and Aref Nayed, *The Author's Intention* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004), 115.

34 Wayne Booth, *Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 139.

At the end of reading a text, the actual-self is confronted with this 'other,' who has experienced a different world and so been refigured. But it is precisely this encounter with the 'other' that constitutes a risk to the actual-self. So Ricoeur writes that the fragility of the self "lies in the confrontation with others, felt to be a threat. It is a fact that the other, because other, comes to be perceived as a danger for one's own identity . . ." ³⁵ This is especially a risk if the reading-self has experienced powerful emotions and intense bonding in the story-world, as these tend to create a self-validating experience. After all, the actual-self is an intimate of the reading-self, and so has first-hand knowledge of those experiences and emotions.

This is one of those moments when the granting of 'a temporary ontological status' to the text, risks losing its 'temporary' evaluation. As the event feels increasingly 'real' or 'actual,' its effects may cross the normal 'counterfactual experience/actual experience' barrier, *which is the actual-self's normal defense against every form of narrative intrusion* (fictional narratives, daydreams, movie events, etc.). ³⁶ In short, the experience may come to be evaluated as 'actual' instead of 'fictional.'

Our opening question, then, is about the encounter of the actual-self with the reading-self. Does this encounter necessarily and completely refigure the actual-self? Is the actual-self automatically appropriated by the cultural institutions and symbolic universe of the reading-self in the story-world? If the answer is 'yes,' then one dares not read any text written from a different socio-cultural location. The reader could only safely read a narrative written from an identical philosophical, economic, religious, and political position, that is, one written by himself. Lundeen makes the point clearly:

35 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 81.

36 While this is not the place for a full discussion of the topic, we suggest that the reading-self exists in the space of cognitive empathy, which is the space for contingency testing (on the distinction between emotional empathy and cognitive empathy, cf. Adam Smith, "Cognitive Empathy and Emotional Empathy in Human Behavior and Evolution," *The Psychological Record* 56 no. 1 [Winter 2006]: 3). The events in this space must appear "real," so that planning for the envisioned contingencies can occur, but must also be defined as "non-real," so that they are not directly acted upon. A thief might "imagine" how a person protects his/her house (cognitive empathy), and consider arranging his attack based on that simulation, even though he knows that the house might be protected differently. Thus, there exists a definitional barrier between experiences in the counterfactual space (experienced as "actual" but defined as "non-real") and experiences in the "real" world (experienced as "actual" and defined as "real").

... if we were to insist on shared identity in all areas, writers would only be fit to represent themselves, and readers, to understand representations of themselves. By this logic, autobiography would emerge as the sole legitimate creative genre and *it would be suitable only for a readership of one: its author*.³⁷

However, it is clear that the encounter does not completely refigure the actual-self. Otherwise the actual-self would act on the symbolic universe of whatever narrative he read. After reading a *Harry Potter* novel, readers would accept magical causation in their everyday world, and begin to solve problems with wand-waving. The actual-self recognizes that the reading-self is in a counterfactual world—one constructed as an extension of the existing world, but without any force for the actual-self (in philosophic terms, it is a possible world that does not obtain). Radford poses this distinction nicely for Shakespeare's audience: "What is worrying is that we are moved by the death of Mercutio and we weep while knowing that no one has really died, that no young man has been cut off in the flower of his youth."³⁸ While the reading-self lives inside the story-world, the actual-self stands outside it, and, after putting the book down, evaluates it.³⁹ Such evaluative mechanisms protect the actual-reader from wholesale appropriation to that possible world: it is recognized as 'non-real' and evaluated for its effects. After all, when Mercutio dies or Jesus dies, no one calls for an ambulance.

Now, if narratives do not necessarily and completely refigure the actual-self, is there still some risk of refiguration? Here the answer is clearly 'yes.' Indeed, without this possibility, the story's meaning could never have an effect upon the reader! Narratives have a hegemonic influence, as the author reproduces her culture—with some revisions and additions—in the text. The reading-self

37 Kathleen Lundeen, "Who Has the Right to Feel? The Ethics of Literary Empathy," *Style* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1998), 261; italics mine. Similarly John Maynard, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009), 362.

38 Colin Radford, "How Can We be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina?" in *Philosophy of Literature: Contemporary and Classic Readings*, ed. J. Eileen and D. Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 172.

39 Using possible world's theory, the reading-self experiences the story-world under the stance of modal realism, where the story-world's reality is indexed to the reading-self. This creates serious meaning, as the state of affairs obtains for reading-self, and so has force for its existence. But the actual-self views the story-world under the stance of actualism, where the story-world is a counterfactual extension of the real-world: it doesn't obtain and so has no necessary force for this self's existence. On these stances, cf. Ruth Ronen, *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1994), 21–24.

will experience a re-shaping to that moment, and bits of that moment may cross the ‘counterfactual experience/actual experience’ barrier, either by direct appropriation (the actual-self accepts the text’s ideas, world, or biases), or by indirect assimilation (the text’s ideas, world, or biases pass unnoticed ‘into’ the actual-self).⁴⁰ It is this experience of appropriation that gave rise Davis’ statement above: “My very sense of myself comes out of the pages of novels . . .”

The issue of indirect assimilation, as attached to the notion of hegemony, is the particular focus of our discussion here. Indirect assimilation most commonly occurs where the reader has no self-development in an area being addressed. For example, imagine an 8 year old who reads a series of formulaic romances where the woman is always subservient to the man. As an 8 year old has no significant development in the areas of gender relations or gender identity, she will likely assume that the narrative’s presentation is ‘normal.’ Such will be reinforced by subsequent events in the narrative, where, for example, the androcentric worldview is tied to positive results. So Gregory notes that while “all of us try on characters . . . we often dismiss the ethical significance of doing so . . . children are most deeply shaped by imitation while being entertained . . .”⁴¹ This, of course, nicely fits the definition of hegemony.

So how does the reader deal with these narrative intrusions? The goal, here, is not to avoid engagements with otherness, as this is not only impossible, but stops the learning process and the growth of the individual.⁴² Indeed, a person who avoids otherness might ask if one should even engage in conversation: no

40 This goes to the question of whether aesthetics and the social/ethical realms are indeed separate, and so to issues in ethical criticism (cf. Chapter 5, where we conclude that they are not). For a historical perspective, cf. Goeffrey Harpham, “Ethics and Literary Criticism,” in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 9, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Martha Nussbaum concludes: “I claim that all citizens need to ponder the issues to which these novelists direct us, since all live in a society in which circumstances of birth, social class, race, gender, and sexuality construct people’s life chances as unequal in a pervasive way” (“Exactly and Responsibly: A Defense of Ethical Criticism,” *Philosophy and Literature* 22, no. 2 [1998]: 361).

41 Marshall Gregory, “Redefining Ethical Criticism,” *Journal of Literary Theory* 4, no. 2 (December 2010): 297, accessed May 30, 2014, Humanities International Compete, EBSCOhost.

42 According to Levinas, learning is constituted as an engagement with otherness. Jens Zimmerman summarizes: “The world, says Levinas, comes to me through the other in a master-teacher relation . . . Thus knowledge can be arrived at *not maieutically but in conversation with the other*” (*Recovering Theological Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 212–213; italics mine).

two people are identical, and their different social positions will always project different local truths (i.e., local to that person, as grounded in their positions of gender, race, marital status, sexual orientation, educational status, religion, economic status, etc.). All encounters involve otherness, and as such constitute a risk to the self.

Rather, the goal is to experience otherness in such a way as to expand the boundaries of one's self—Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' or Ricoeur's 'refiguration'—without being automatically or uncritically appropriated to that experience. What the actual-self needs is a strategy which evaluates and critiques *the otherness that is presented by the reading-self*. The actual-self can do this because the executive function, which selects what is 'kept as valid,' resides in the actual-self.⁴³ The actual-self decides, explicitly or implicitly, which narrative intrusions to adopt and which to reject. While the actual-self is influenced by the roles and positions assumed by the reading-self, the well-developed actual-self uses its cognitive resources to evaluate and critique these roles (we will examine the problems with this formulation below). As Booth concludes:

... we must both open ourselves to 'others' that look initially dangerous or worthless, and yet prepare ourselves to cast them off whenever, after keeping company with them, we must conclude that they are potentially harmful.⁴⁴

Here we might consider something like Feagin's model of response. She suggests that the reader has two kinds of response to a work of art: an initial direct response, followed by an evaluative meta-response. The direct response is "a response to the qualities and content of the work," while the meta-response is "how one feels about and what one thinks about one's responding (directly) in the way one does to the qualities and content of the work."⁴⁵ One's direct response may be that a narrative is aesthetically pleasing, while the meta-response that the work is immoral. Here one has the experience of the art as aesthetically expansive, all the while maintaining the capacity to evaluate and reject that meaning. Feagin summarizes for her example:

43 On the "executive function," see Chapter 4, section: "Coherence and the Self." This forms the basis for resistant readings.

44 Booth, *The Company We Keep*, 488.

45 Susan Feagin, "The Pleasures of Tragedy," in *Philosophy of Literature*, ed. Eileen John and Dominic Lopes (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 187; author's parenthesis.

The direct response...if successful, would be pleasurable (exciting, enticing, etc.) but, given the state of one's ordinary moral feeling, one's meta-response would be *displeasure* at finding that one is capable of such callousness.⁴⁶

This notion of a dual-response dovetails nicely with our notion of two readers: the direct response is similar to the experience of reading-self, while the meta-response to the evaluation of that experience by the actual-self. However, this model needs development, based on the nature of hegemony. Hegemony is rooted in the appearance of normalcy and this normalcy's validation by the events in the story-world, so that the reader *does not feel any need to create a meta-response*. All appears natural, and works together for 'the good' in the story-world. In short, the reader's evaluative response requires strong mechanisms for recognition, in order to even have an evaluative response.

Given our model for reading, we can cast the recognition event as: that moment when the reader's attention shifts from the reading-self (who is experiencing the story-world) to the actual-self (who evaluates that story-world). The cause of this shift, which generates the recognition event, is the issue of importance here. Somehow the reading-self, as a participant in the story-world, recognizes that the textual world transgresses an ideological belief or stance so that an evaluative response is needed. This occurs because the reading-self is not constructed *ex nihilo*, but as a mimetic projection of the actual-self and so begins with the latter's cultural treasury and cherished beliefs. As the reading-self was devised for the experiencing of counterfactuals, its original cultural treasury is serially replaced by each line in the text, so that the reading-self 'becomes' the characters, beliefs, and cultural traditions of the text. So, for example, when the story-world poses the use of demonic causation, the reading-self's conviction in physical causation is replaced by a conviction in demonic causation, and the reading-self now expects demonic causation throughout the rest of the novel.

But the important point, for our discussion, is how the reading-self initially grasps the notion of demonic causation: it is encountered as a disjunction. 'Demonic causation' is not part of the reading-self's initial construction. Small disjunctions, such as liking cauliflower and carrots, may be simply accepted; but large disjunctions, such as demonic causation, are not. Here the actual-self steps in, recognizes the disjunction as a transgression of his symbolic universe, and considers various cultural models in order to make sense of the event.

46 Ibid., 190, author's parenthesis and italics.

This is the recognition event, and at such a disjunction, the actual-self will decide how to evaluate the transgression, and also how the reading-self will be shaped by it.

For example, when the post-Enlightenment reader encounters the notion of the demonic causation of sickness, he recognizes it as a cross-cultural disjunction. The actual-self will evaluate that disjunction and decide how his reading-self will deal with it. Perhaps the actual-self will evaluate it as the manifestation of a pre-scientific worldview, and yet reshape his reading-self to accept that worldview for its time in the story-world. Next the reader encounters the disjunction that Jesus exorcizes the demon with only a word. This creates an intra-cultural disjunction (exorcisms are not done that way in the 1st century Jewish world), and now the actual-self will need to repeat the process of evaluating the disjunction and deciding how to shape his reading-self. Here the actual-self might reshape the symbolic universe of his reading-self (Jesus is higher on the map of being than demons), and accept this for the rest of its time in the story-world.

Let us apply this to our example of the novel where the woman is always subservient to the man, but as read by a woman with a well-developed sense of gender identity. This novel creates a disjunction with the way that the reading-self, as modeled on the actual-self, grasps the world (her symbolic universe, as characterized by gender equality). Here the actual-self accesses various cultural models in order to make sense of the events, and recognizes the model of patriarchy as underlain by an androcentric bias. This is the recognition event. The actual-self evaluates this notion negatively, as a transgression of her belief in equality, and then decides how to reshape her reading-self for its time in the story-world. She might reshape it so as to engage in a resistant reading. Perhaps she even puts the novel down. So Gibson states that we put down certain narratives because “we discover a person we refuse to become, a mask we refuse to put on, a role we will not play.”⁴⁷ Just this reaction shows that the actual-self does recognize disjunctions, and implicitly or explicitly shapes her reading-self.

In this model, the disjunction occurs because of the transgression of a prior belief. These beliefs are anterior to reading, so that the reading has ‘something to transgress’ in the first place. This brings us back to our earlier comment, of the ‘well-developed actual-self.’ The reader must have some prior ideological stance on the issue at hand—however such is gained—which the text’s

47 Gibson, “Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers,” 5.

'appearance of normalcy' transgresses. In short, the recognition of a transgression occurs because of self-development, via consciousness-raising, in the respective area.

So, we suggest developing our model in the following ways. First, the flesh-and-blood reader needs self-development in the various ideological areas. Without such development, say in gender relations, the reader will simply assume that the narrative's presentation is normative, and hegemony wins. Second, the reader needs to be aware that all texts project a cultural system and will have points of variance with the reader's own. Thus, when an ideological disjunction occurs, it is not glossed over, but generates a recognition event. Without the recognition event, an ideological distortion risks refiguring the self. Third, the reader needs to develop evaluative mechanisms for the critique of ideology. Without these, the reader may recognize that the narrative is presenting a different ideological stance, but not have the resources to mount the evaluative meta-response. Fourth, the reader needs to engage in second readings that are designed to reveal ideology (e.g., Feminist reading, Postcolonial reading), so that the initial reading does not stand unopposed, and is not uncritically assimilated.

Let us return to our example of the 8 year old child. It is unlikely that any 8 year old has the self-identity or critical resources to resist the hegemony of an androcentric novel, and she (in our view) should not be allowed to read such . . . or at the very least, only do so with guidance. But by her college years, she will have sufficient self-development to recognize the subservient female role projected by, say, *Canterbury Tales*. She will also, hopefully, have the means to critique such ideological stances, as well as the means to create non-deforming counter readings. This allows for an expansion of the boundaries of the actual-self via experiential learning, but without being annexed to or deformed by the experiences of the reading-self.

To this point, we have rejected the notion of necessary and complete refiguration of the actual-self, and accepted the notion of possible refiguration, along with mechanisms for its correction. But two further wrinkles need to be addressed. First, our discussion has focused on the propositional knowledge developed in reading, and the cognitive rejection of the same. But texts do not only create propositional meaning. They also create emotional, kinesthetic, and even archetypal knowledge. These are not so easily identified, and so tend to cross our watchful barriers unnoticed. So Gregory writes:

No matter how slightly, we will have become someone different from who we were before because we will have enlarged our capacity for thinking some thoughts we would not have thought in just this way, for feeling some emotions we would not have experienced in just this way, and for

making some judgments that we would not have constructed in just the way.⁴⁸

This means that the reader's recognition and critique cannot simply function in the realm of propositional meaning, but must also evaluate emotional and kinesthetic meaning. We already observed this in our example of a cigarette commercial (Chapter 6), where we showed that the linguistic meaning ('smoking is hazardous to your health') is eclipsed by the emotional and kinesthetic content ('you will never find love until you smoke two packs a day'). While the non-linguistic and non-propositional information may be more difficult to spot, it is far from impossible, and recognition/evaluation of these makes for a more richly textured reading evaluation.

Second, the text will always have ideological stances which the reader misses. No reader is fully equipped to recognize and reject all elements of otherness—that is, unless the reader is fully actualized in all areas of culture, including the assumptions which gave rise to each social institution. For this reason, the reader should, in our opinion, routinely engage second readings which are designed to reveal ideological distortions. At times, these critiques will reveal little of difference with the actual-self's belief structure. But at other times, they will reveal considerable fodder for discussion, and so create a more richly textured reading evaluation.

In conclusion, this discussion has suggested several narrative paths that risk damage to the self. The most risky path involves unopposed initial readings, where the reading-self takes on ideologically constructed roles in an area where the actual-self has little self-development. The best answer to this 'unopposed reading' is to engage in self-development, to utilize multiple reading methodologies, and to participate in larger discussions. Methods that meet this need, by identifying the various ideological stances, include certain forms of Feminist criticism, African-American criticism, Postcolonial criticism, Womanist criticism, Marxist criticism, Liberation criticism, Queer criticism, and Cultural criticism.

Second Readings: Staged Readings

(NOTE: given the limitations of space, this section will make frequent use of general method names, such as 'Feminist criticism,' without referring to specific types; these are only to be construed broadly, as general examples for the issues being addressed)

48 Gregory, "Redefining Ethical Criticism," 294.

Having examined the central problems of monologic readings, we now return to the reader's many interests and desires. Each desire, as an intentional state, selects a certain reading design, and creates another voice from the text. Each voice deserves a place in the larger discussion over the text, resulting in a conversation that contains critique and creativity, along with texturing and enriching elements. Indeed, we might make a short list of these readerly interests: the desire for aesthetic pleasure, for self-development, for encountering 'the other,' for vicarious experiences, for engaging newness, for spiritual development, for creative play, for emancipation from ideological restraints, for escape from the ordinary, and so on.

In order to create such a conversation, we propose a staged design for reading. The first stage is to give the author her voice, for the ethical reasons already listed. The second stage is to engage the reader's many desires and methods, for the sake of the larger conversation. Only this notion of 'conversation' needs to be clarified. It is not simply a forum for presenting a variety of disconnected perspectives on the text and then leaving the table—which is not really a conversation at all. The conversation has goals, which are related to those desires, and these shape how the conversation occurs. Indeed, the desires are the driving passion (motivation) for having the conversation in the first place. An examination of those desires suggests that they fit into a small number of groupings, and these groupings allow for a more general analysis of the types of conversations to be had. Below we will present examples of three central 'desires,' beyond that of desiring to hear the author's voice, along with representative methods for each.

One grouping is oriented about the desire to be free from ideological controls and manipulation. *As readers are subjects*, their voices should not be manipulated, silenced, or marginalized by the narrative. This means that readers need mechanisms to keep the actual-self from being appropriated by the text. As discussed above, second readings should include methods that are designed to reveal ideological structures and covert manipulation (propaganda). Critique and correction are central elements of this broader conversation. The voices for this conversation are provided by the use of methods such as Feminist criticism, Marxist criticism, Womanist criticism, African-American criticism, Postcolonial criticism, Queer criticism, and Liberation criticism.

A second grouping is oriented about the desire to engage in experiences of otherness, and so develop selfhood. *As readers are subjects*, they are worth the effort of 'becoming.' This notion, of 'becoming,' has no direct object, for it is not defined by its predicates. Self-development is a dimensionless quality (not regulated by standards or reducible to measurements) that is its own value and end. This desire for an 'expansive self' suggests that the conversation include

various engagements with otherness, especially once the actual-self has the means to recognize and critique ideological structures. Here readers might utilize methods that characterize a text's symbolic universe, describe the social institutions of the intended audience, or engage in perspective-taking. In each, readers refine their grasp of the text—the otherness of its world—in ways that any single perspective cannot. Readers create an expansive understanding and encountering of that world, as opposed to a provincial one that simply repeats their existing world. The voices for this conversation are created by the use of methods such as Sociological criticism (esp. a sociology of knowledge), Anthropological criticism (esp. cultural anthropology), Historical methods (Historical-Critical methods, New Historicism), Narrative criticism, and Romanticism (engaging the author's vision of the world).

A third grouping is oriented about the desire for personal enrichment. As *readers are subjects*, another central goal is their enjoyment, whether this is found experiencing aesthetic pleasure, engaging in meaningful activity, escaping the everydayness of life, or engaging in creative play. Here relationships, personal involvement, and creativity are valued. The voices for this conversation are created by engaging methods such as Narrative criticism, New Criticism, Reader-Response criticism, and Deconstruction.

In short, interpretation is best viewed as a conversation in which readers 'create' voices from various interests and perspectives, for the purpose of generating possibilities that figure into larger, meaningful conversations. Readers are given, over and over again, the unique opportunity of experiencing worlds that are underlain by foreign assumptions, and of engaging in robust conversations with the many voices of critique, expansion, and enrichment. Conflict will emerge in such conversations, as each method is underlain by different assumptions about the world: each method reproduces its founding assumptions from the raw materials of the text. These conflicts should not be glossed over, for just here readers are offered another unique opportunity, namely to reexamine their own assumptions as attached to specific applications of those assumptions. This kind of challenge can be found in few other places. It is no wonder that certain genres, such as 'narrative,' have endured in all human cultures and that the issue of interpretation remains a robust conversation.

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